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Crisis of Legitimacy: Honorius, Galla Placidia, and the Struggles for Control of the Western Roman Empire, 405-425 C.E.

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Crisis of Legitimacy: Honorius, Galla Placidia, and the Struggles for Control of the Western Roman Empire, 405-425 C.E.

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedication

For my mother, Mona Katherine Lawrence, whose seemingly endless supply of inspiration and encouragement carried me through to the end.

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a new analytical narrative of the years from 405 to 425 C.E., a period which extends from the final phase of the general Stilicho's control over the administration of the emperor Honorius, to the imperial accession of Honorius' young nephew, the emperor Valentinian III, under the regency of his mother, Galla Placidia. The narrative places the many historical problems of this period, especially the rise of a whole series of usurpers and the influx of non-Roman, "barbarian" groups into the western empire, in the weakness of the western administration under the emperor Honorius. The imperial response to these challenges, in turn, led to fundamental changes in the political life of the western empire, including new notions of dynastic legitimacy, the integration of barbarian groups into Roman political life, and the rise of over-powerful generals operating in their own personal interests, with or without the consent of the imperial court at Rome or Ravenna. Such changes would come to characterize political life in the western empire for the rest of the fifth century, ultimately shifting the locus of power from the emperors themselves to their dominant military officials, and also to local sources of political authority. This dissertation therefore argues that we must see the later decline of imperial authority in the western Roman empire as a consequence of the challenges to the Honorian regime during in this period, and the political transformations that emerged as a result.

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Introduction

This dissertation offers a new analytical narrative of the period from 405 to 425 C.E., which is to say from the final years of the general Stilicho's control over the administration of the emperor Honorius between 405 and 408 to the restoration of the Theodosian imperial dynasty in the west by an army from the eastern empire. The end point is this restoration, and the installation of the young Valentinian III as western Augustus with his mother, the Augusta Galla Placidia serving as regent for her son. The narrative places the many historical problems of this period, especially the rise of a whole series of usurpers and the influx of non-Roman, "barbarian" groups into the western empire, in the weakness of the western administration under the emperor Honorius.[1] The imperial response to these challenges, in turn, led to fundamental changes in the political life of the western empire, including new notions of dynastic legitimacy, the integration of barbarian groups into Roman political life, and the rise of over-powerful generals operating in their own personal interests, with or without the consent of the imperial court at Rome or Ravenna. Such changes would come to characterize political life in the western empire for the rest of the fifth century, ultimately shifting the locus of power from the emperors themselves to their dominant military officials, and also to local sources of political authority. We must therefore see the later decline of the western Roman empire as a major consequence of the challenges to the Honorian regime and the political transformations that resulted from them.

[1] The term "barbarian" had a wide range of meanings for Roman writers. Among others, the term could signify not only individuals or groups living beyond the Roman *limes*, but also Roman citizens who had revolted from imperial control or had otherwise acted contrary to Roman law, such as bandits or thieves. Nevertheless, while the category was fluid, Roman presumptions on the superiority of Greco-Roman civilization always meant that term carried a derogatory implication. For discussion of the term, see Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35-62. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, I have adopted the current scholarly usage of "barbarian" as a general, neutral term in reference to individuals or groups who were not Roman citizens.

Scholars have traditionally viewed the conflicts of this period through the lens of preconceived notions of ethnic identity, which often results in forced and overly simplistic narratives of "barbarian"/"Roman" antagonism. In contrast to that scholarly tradition, this dissertation takes an analytical and source-based approach to the political discord of the years 405-425, and abandons problematic notions of ethnic identity as an all-purpose explanation for political action. This approach results in a far more complex narrative that sees Roman/barbarian concord and cooperation behind many of the political actions of this period, both against and in support of the weak regime of the emperor Honorius. Moreover, an analytical narrative allows us to grant far more agency to individuals who are often depicted as passive actors in traditional narratives. In particular, the present study argues that Galla Placidia, the half-sister of the emperor Honorius, was a formidable political actor in her own right, far different from the mere captured Roman princess as she is portrayed in so many traditional narratives. Finally, this approach leads to more nuanced interpretations of the primary sources for this period, including the works of the historian Orosius, the poet Paulinus of Pella, and the chronicler Hydatius.

The narrative model is well suited to the period covered in the present study because it allows analytical arguments to be set within the overall context of imperial history. In a period for which the sources are as fragmentary and conflicting as they are in the early fifth century, analysis is inseparable from the construction of a reliable narrative. By contrast, the political events of the period are not well suited to thematic discussion, which would necessitate massive repetition of identical evidence in one chapter after another. Two stylistic consequences emerge from the analytical narrative model. The first and most evident is the division of chapters into episodic, chronological units. Each period is discussed and analyzed in chronological sequence offering a wide variety of insights on individual events. Second, unless absolutely necessary,

discussion and engagement of secondary works are primarily relegated to the footnotes. While this is a common feature of much published scholarship, it is an admittedly unorthodox approach in the context of a dissertation. Nevertheless, rather than disrupt the overall flow of the narrative with constant discussions of the scholarship, discussion of the various point of scholarly contention is confined as much as possible to the notes.

Within this narrative structure, the major chapters break down into natural chronological units, each with a story to tell. Chapter 1 situates the main narrative in the major events of the late fourth and early fifth century by discussing the early life of Galla Placidia until her capture by Alaric's forces during the sack of Rome in 410. This framework allows a close examination of the general Stilicho's techniques for dominating both the western imperial court and the children of the emperor Theodosius. This chapter also examines the weakness of the imperial court after the fall of Stilicho and its consequent inability to respond effectively to the threat of Alaric in the years 408-410.

Chapter 2 details the imperial crisis during the years 406-410 from the perspective of the Gallic provinces. In particular, this chapter presents the Rhine crossing of the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi and the usurpation of Constantine III in 406 as the results of Stilicho's policies in weakening the defenses of Gaul in favor of the safety of Italy in the early years of the fifth century. This chapter also examines the expansion of Constantine's Gallic regime and its fall in 411 due to both internal dissension and the rise of a new political faction in Ravenna led by the general Constantius.

Chapter 3 covers the years 411-414, which saw the entry of Alaric's army, now led by his brother-in-law Athaulf, into the Gallic political sphere. After forming short-lived alliances with

both the usurper Jovinus and the Honorian regime, Athaulf rebelled against the control of the central government and married Galla Placidia at the provincial capital of Narbonne in southern Gaul in 414. This chapter discusses the political implications of this union for the western empire at large, concluding that Placidia and Athaulf founded an alternative, yet potentially legitimate imperial regime in southern Gaul in direct opposition to the Honorian administration at Ravenna, one that claimed the loyalty of a meaningful proportion of leading Gauls.

Chapter 4 continues the discussions of the previous chapter. It examines the move of Athaulf and Placidia's regime to Barcelona, the murder of Athaulf in 415, and the subsequent position of Placidia among her husband's followers. Against the traditional depiction of Placidia as a captive Roman princess, one that is standard in much of the scholarship and has at least some basis in hostile primary sources, this chapter argues that Placidia continued to hold a respected and powerful position as Gothic queen even after Athaulf's death. She therefore had very little reason to wish to return to her brother's control. Nevertheless, the threat of famine in 415/416 forced Athaulf's successor Wallia to make peace with Constantius, and that required the return of Placidia to Ravenna, where, as later chapters will show, she continued to scheme to retain her independence.

Chapter 5 discusses Wallia's campaigns on behalf of Honorius and Constantius against the other barbarian groups settled in Spain from 416-418. It then moves on to consider the circumstances surrounding the Gothic settlement on imperial soil in 418/419. The chapter argues that Placidia's continued relationship to the former followers of Athaulf created an essential political link that helped to guarantee their loyalty to the Honorian regime. It also argues that Constantius' settlement of Wallia's followers in Aquitania was meant to be a temporary measure and was modeled on the precedent of Athaulf's troop distribution in the region in 413/414.

Chapter 6 examines the major events of the years 419-422, including the reestablishment of Honorius' control over the provinces of the western empire, the rise of Constantius to the imperial throne, and a new outbreak of political turmoil following his death in 421. The year 422 saw the breakdown of relations between the emperor Honorius and Galla Placidia, ultimately leading to the exile of Placidia and her family to the eastern empire. Contrary to many scholarly narratives, however, this chapter argues that we cannot see a direct relationship between the factional violence between Placidia and Honorius at Ravenna in 422 and the contemporary discord among the Roman military administration.

Finally, Chapter 7 examines the rise and fall of the usurper John, who seized the western throne after the death of Honorius in August 423. This usurpation led to a new civil war between the eastern and western empires in 425, resulting in the successful establishment of Galla Placidia as regent for her son, Valentinian III, with the support of the eastern branch of the Theodosian dynasty. This chapter argues that John's regime failed mainly because of its lack of support among the western military aristocracy. It also argues that after the failure of John's regime, the practice of usurpation ceased to be viewed as viable path for political discontent, with major consequences for the future of the empire.

Two interrelated themes run through this whole narrative. The first is the usurpation of the imperial prerogative from the dynastically legitimate Theodosian regime. The internal conflicts in the western empire during the late fourth century saw the gradual decline of imperial authority under the successors of the emperor Valentinian I, specifically his children, the emperors Gratian and Valentinian II. This led to the extension of the power and influence of the eastern emperor Theodosius into the western political sphere, not least through two separate civil wars against the usurpers Magnus Maximus and Eugenius. At Theodosius' death in 395, the briefly unified

Roman Empire was again divided between his children, Arcadius in the eastern empire and Honorius in the newly conquered western empire. The prestige and political authority of the Theodosian regime in the west was therefore weak from the beginning of Honorius' reign, a situation complicated by the youth of the new emperor and the distracted politics of his regent, the general Stilicho. In particular, Stilicho's preoccupation in pursuing his rivalry with the regents of the emperor Arcadius kept his attention focused on the eastern empire to the detriment of the western provinces. Stilicho's responses to the threats of Alaric (401-402) and Radagaisus (405-406), it could be argued, required the depletion of Gallic military forces in order to maintain a strong defense of Italy. But the ability to defend Italy further aggravated the situation elsewhere in the west. The result was the rise of a long series of usurpers who offered direct challenges to the leadership of the Honorian regime and to the Theodosian dynasty's control over the western empire as a whole.

Political chaos therefore characterizes the history of the western empire in the years 406-425. At least ten men seized the purple during the course of this period, usurping the imperial prerogatives of the emperor Honorius and establishing more or less powerful regimes. The contemporary influx of barbarian groups into the western empire also directly informed the rise and progress of many of these usurpations. While it is possible that the famous Rhine crossing of the Vandals, Alans, and Suebi in 406 played some role in initiating these challenges to the Honorian regime, these and other non-Roman groups, particularly the followers of Alaric and Athaulf, frequently formed symbiotic relationships with various usurpers of this period. Through the promotion or support of a usurper's regime, these barbarian groups gained an opportunity for integration into the Roman political sphere, a proposition which the legitimate regime at Ravenna sometimes denied them. The reestablishment of Honorian control of the provinces

therefore required both strong military leadership as well as a viable pathway for the absorption of barbarian groups into the political and administrative fabric of the western empire.

A second theme of this dissertation, and one closely related to the first, is the rise of Galla Placidia, the half sister of the emperor Honorius, as a political actor in her own right within the shifting fortunes of the Theodosian dynasty. Placidia was descended from not one but two imperial dynasties, those of Valentinian I and Theodosius. This inherited legitimacy, combined with her momentous decision to reject the traditionally celibate role of princesses in these dynasties, allowed Placidia to cast herself as a viable, alternative locus of legitimate authority in political contests with the unstable Honorian regime. Placidia's ambitions came to the fore with her marriage to the Gothic king Athaulf in 414, and the foundation of an independent, yet dynastically legitimate regime based first at Narbonne and later at Barcelona. After Athaulf's death in 415 and her return to Ravenna, Placidia's continuing ties to Athaulf's followers ensured that they remained a powerful force in Roman politics on whom she could rely in times of need.

The implicit dynastic authority that Placidia inherited as a member of the Theodosian house also seems to have played a role in the changing nature of intra-Roman political struggles during this period. The multiple usurpations that Honorius faced between 406 and 420 typically represented political discontent with some aspect of the central government's rule. The rise of Placidia as a political actor and her decision to marry Athaulf in 414 ultimately offered new pathways for ambitious individuals to work for their own power within the confines of the legitimate Theodosian dynasty. Placidia's membership in the reigning dynasty certainly played a role in the support her Narbonese regime enjoyed among the southern Gallic aristocrats. Her decision to reject the traditional celibacy for women of the imperial house allowed Honorius' dominating general Constantius to realize his own desires for imperial power through marriage

to Placidia in 417. Finally, the *comes Africae* Boniface set a dangerous precedent for later fifth-century political discord in 422 by revolting from the Honorian regime, while continuing to claim an allegiance to the Theodosian dynasty on the basis of his professed loyalty to Placidia.

The weakness of the Honorian regime and the resulting conflicts and political maneuverings of this period therefore set vital precedents for the future pursuit and conduct of factional discord within the western Roman empire. Honorius and the Theodosian dynasty's remarkable success in dealing with usurpers during this period, despite the fundamental weakness that the mere fact of constant usurpations actually demonstrates, ensured that after the destruction of John's administration in 425, usurpation ceased to be a viable option for opponents of the ruling regime. Instead, an alternative paradigm had been established by Constantius, one that could serve as a model for the future. Revolts against central authority continued after 425, but they now manifested themselves as contests between ambitious ministers trying to establish a dominant position within the legitimate imperial administration. As such, these disputants followed the techniques of the more successful political actors of the Honorian regime, particularly Stilicho, Constantius, and Boniface, and to some degree, also Alaric and Athaulf. The use of barbarian groups by the usurpers Attalus and Jovinus, as well as Placidia's alliance with Athaulf in 414, also set notable precedents for the entry of non-Romans as valuable interest groups in Roman political affairs. The conflicts of Honorius' regime therefore fundamentally altered the course of political life in the western Roman empire.

Chapter 1: Early History of Galla Placidia to 410

The last two decades of the fourth century saw the decline of the dynasty of the emperor Valentinian (364-375) in the western empire and the extension of the eastern dynasty of Theodosius (379-395) into the western political sphere. The successful usurpation of Magnus Maximus (383-388) resulted both in the death of Valentinian's eldest son, the emperor Gratian, and later, the flight of his younger son, the emperor Valentinian II, from the imperial residence at Milan to Thessalonica. In this city, a marriage alliance was formed between the western dynasty of Valentinian and the newly established eastern dynasty of Theodosius. Theodosius, having recently lost his first wife Aelia Flacilla, agreed to marry Valentinian II's sister Galla. As a result of this alliance, Theodosius launched a civil war against Maximus in 388 to restore Valentinian II to the western throne. When Valentinian II died under suspicious circumstances in 392 and a second usurper, Eugenius, seized the western throne, Theodosius again marched with his eastern forces, successfully defeating the usurper and the western army in 394 and assuming control over the united Roman empire.

The empire was again divided, however, following the death of the emperor Theodosius in early 395. His two sons by his first wife, Aelia Flaccilla, now assumed control. Arcadius, aged 17 or 18, received the eastern empire. Shortly before his death, Theodosius had also raised the ten-year-old Honorius as Augustus over the western empire. The youth of the two new emperors meant that regents were required for the actual administration of their regimes. The general Stilicho, who had previously married Serena, the niece and adopted daughter of Theodosius, assumed control of Honorius' western regime. Stilicho fortified his power through a reorganization of the western military establishment as well as maintaining a close control over

Honorius and his half-sister, Galla Placidia, the daughter of Theodosius and Galla. This resulted in marriages between Honorius and Stilicho's daughters, first Maria in 398 and after Maria's death, Thermantia in 407. Stilicho's attempts to extend his control over the eastern empire, however, initiated a long period of political antagonism between East and West, as the regents of Arcadius had no intention of handing over power to the western regent.

As time passed and Honorius grew to maturity during the first decade of the fifth century, Stilicho's regime became increasingly unstable. In response to two Italian invasions under the Gothic leaders Alaric (401-402) and Radagaisus (405-406), Stilicho was forced to severely diminish the defenses of Gaul. This tactic resulted in a series of usurpations in the Gallic provinces as well as the famous Rhine crossing of the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi in 406. With these pressures came new factional discord from within the imperial court. The result was the overthrow of Stilicho's regime in 408.

After Stilicho's death, political chaos consumed the imperial court as various factions vied for control of the emperor Honorius. This situation received further complication with the invasion of Alaric in 408 who also sought a position in Honorius' regime. Over the course of the next two years, Alaric used a variety of tactics to reinforce his position in the negotiations with Honorius' court at Ravenna, including successive sieges of Rome and an alliance with the Roman Senate to raise the usurper Priscus Attalus. When these tactics failed, Alaric finally abandoned diplomacy and allowed his followers to sack the imperial city for three days in August 410. When Alaric's army departed from Rome on August 27, they carried not only immeasurable wealth, but also a hostage of far more political value: Galla Placidia, the sister of the emperor Honorius.

While examining various events in this overall narrative, this chapter particularly focuses on the early life of Galla Placidia, the daughter of the emperor Theodosius and Galla. As with any princess of the imperial house, Galla Placidia's power stemmed from the prospect of dynastic legitimacy inherent in her person. During the chaotic period of usurpations and power struggles that characterized Honorius' rule from 395 to 423, this capacity to bestow the potential for Theodosian dynastic legitimacy on the regime of her spouse and on their offspring arguably made Placidia the most potent threat to her brother's control of the western empire. As we will see in the following chapters, Placidia's marriage to the Gothic king Athaulf in 414 established an alternative to Honorius' imperial regime that garnered support among the disaffected aristocrats of southern Gaul and northern Spain. Furthermore, although Honorius raised his general Constantius to co-emperor in 421, Constantius' marriage to Placidia in 417 marked his first steps toward imperial rule. Finally, Placidia's status as regent and mother of Valentinian III enabled her to claim rule of the western empire for much of the period from 425 to her death in 450.

Tracing events through the early life of Galla Placidia therefore situates this study in terms of the event history of the late fourth and early fifth century, as well as provides a narrative foundation for one of the key political actors during the period from 405 to 425 C.E. In particular, this approach establishes the basis for Placidia's power as the offspring of two imperial dynasties, those of Valentinian and Theodosius, which arguably gave her better claim to control over the western empire than her brother Honorius, who was descended from the Theodosian dynasty alone. It also allows for a close examination of the policies of Stilicho in dominating western imperial court and the children of the emperor Theodosius. Finally, this approach provides context for the weakness of the Honorian regime after the fall of Stilicho in

408, a time of political chaos in the western empire that ultimately led to the capture of Placidia by the forces of Alaric.

This chapter argues several points within this overall narrative context. Against previous scholarship that sees irregularity behind Placidia's celibacy under Stilicho's regime, this chapter argues that this celibacy was perfectly in keeping with the traditional chastity of the daughters of the dynasties of Valentinian and Theodosius. This chapter also examines the scholarly arguments regarding Placidia's role in the execution of her cousin Serena and concludes that we should not assume that this event is evidence for Placidia's rise as a completely independent political actor. Finally, this chapter argues that it is far more logical to see Placidia's period of captivity among the forces of Alaric as beginning in 409 with the rise of the usurper Attalus, rather than as a result of the fall of Rome in August of 410.

In the spring of 383, Magnus Maximus, a Spanish military officer serving in Britain, usurped the purple and succeeded in overthrowing the western regime of the emperor Gratian.[2] In the

[2] Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.35.2-3. Zosimus composed his history in the eastern empire during the late fifth or early sixth century. His value as a source for events of the fourth and fifth centuries varies depending on which earlier author he was using to construct his narrative. For the period from 270-404, Zosimus primarily used the *Universal History* of the pagan orator and historian Eunapius of Sardis. For the years from 407 to 410 (the year in which the *Historia nova* abruptly ends), he relied on the work of Olympiodorus of Thebes. While modern scholarship has slightly moved away from the estimation of the Byzantine writer Photius, who presented Zosimus as largely a copier of earlier histories, it is nevertheless evident that Zosimus heavily relied on the work of both Eunapius and Olympiodorus for the construction of the *Historia nova*, taking large portions verbatim from the original texts. This fact provides us with some direction for accepting or rejecting Zosimus as a reliable source for later fourth and fifth century events. In particular, we know that Eunapius' history presented a severe indictment of Christianity and the Christian emperors. This stance inevitably informs Zosimus' history of these figures, as we will see in the coming pages. Olympiodorus on the other hand was both a historian and diplomat who had ties to political life of the western empire. Zosimus' history is therefore demonstrably more reliable when he takes up Olympiodorus as his source after 407. For recent work on Zosimus, Eunapius, and Olympiodorus, see François Paschoud, *Cinq Études sur Zosime* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1975); R. C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire: Eunapius, Olympiodorus, Priscus and Malchus*, Vol. 1 (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1981), 1-

following years, he managed to establish his control over the regions of Gaul, Britain, and Spain, as well as to receive the recognition of the eastern emperor Theodosius as a member of the imperial college.[3] The legitimate dynasty of Valentinian, now represented by the child emperor Valentinian II reigning under the regency of his mother Justina, remained in control of Italy, Africa, and the Illyrian prefecture.[4] In summer of 387, however, Maximus broke the uneasy peace that had settled on the empire in the intervening years. His invasion of Italy forced Valentinian II, together with his mother, Justina, and at least one of his three sisters, Galla, to flee the imperial residence at Milan and seek refuge in the city of Thessalonica, the capital of the western diocese of Macedonia.[5]

From Thessalonica, the imperial family implored the assistance of the eastern Emperor Theodosius against Maximus' aggression. The primary sources provide two quite different accounts of Theodosius' decision to intervene in this struggle for control over the western empire. Augustine of Hippo claims that Theodosius was driven to help the beleaguered family out of his firm respect for the memory of Gratian.[6] The historian Zosimus, however, drawing on

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47; Wolf Liebeschuetz, "Pagan Historiography and the Decline of Empire", in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* ed. Gabriele Marasco (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 177-218.

[3] Theodosius seems to have given at least tacit recognition of Maximus in 384. Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.37.3 tells us that Theodosius' *praefectus praetorio* (PPO) Cynegius displayed Maximus' imperial portraits in Alexandria in this year. In the year 386, Maximus' consul, the PPO Euodius, was recognized in the east. As noted by R. Malcolm Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 32-34.

[4] In order to deal with the barbarian crisis of 378-382, Gratian had ceded control of the Illyrian prefecture to Theodosius. By September, 382, however, Theodosius had returned the prefecture to western control. See Malcolm Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths", *Chiron* 26 (1996), 1-27; Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 32-34, 83-84.

[5] Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.43.1.

[6] Augustine, *De civitate dei* V.26.

the earlier work of Eunapius, claims that Theodosius was hesitant until he saw and fell in love with Valentinian's sister. He agreed to help the refugees only after Justina offered the hand of Galla in exchange for his help.[7]

Many modern historians have rightly questioned both of these stated causes for Theodosius' intervention. Zosimus himself or his source, the pagan orator Eunapius, is a hostile witness to the activities of Christian emperors such as Theodosius, and his account is not only overly romantic, but in fact seeks to show the natural laziness and cowardice of the emperor. This evident bias severely discredits Zosimus' testimony.[8] In a similar way, Augustine's account visibly labors to create the image of Theodosius as the good Christian emperor of the Nicene literary tradition.[9] This fact casts doubt on his testimony about Theodosius' benevolent intention of helping the dynasty that had raised him to the purple.[10]

A better interpretation of Theodosius' reasons for giving aid to the young Valentinian II derives from a close study of the politics of the period. In a recent article, Neil McLynn plausibly

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[7] Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.44.1-4. Seeck largely accepts Zosimus' account. See Otto Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966, original publication Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlerschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920), V.210-211.

[8] As argued by Oost and Errington. See Stewart Irvin Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: a Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 46-48; Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 35-37. For Zosimus' hostility against Christian emperors and the resulting distortions of his presentation of events, see in particular Paschoud, *Cinq Études sur Zosime*, 125-147.

[9] In *De civitate dei* V.25, Augustine presents Theodosius' war against Maximus and vengeance for Gratian as part of God's design for Christian emperors. In *De civitate dei* V.26, Augustine fails to mention Theodosius' marriage to Galla, who like her mother, Justina, and brother, Valentinian II, was an adherent of homoean Christianity. In avoiding this marriage, he is able to present Theodosius' relationship with Valentinian II as one of paternal devotion resulting in his participation in the civil war.

[10] As argued by Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 159; Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 35-37.

argues that Theodosius had himself usurped the eastern throne in 379. He had also raised his son Arcadius to the purple in 383 without the permission of the senior emperor Gratian, thus raising the tension between east and west.[11] While there is no reason to doubt the internal security of his eastern throne, his decision to marry into the unquestionably legitimate dynasty of Valentinian therefore provided a valuable prop to his claims over the eastern empire.

There is also reason to suspect that Theodosius wished to expand his own influence into the western empire. In this endeavor, Theodosius' marriage alliance with the dynasty of Valentinian and his military support in restoring Valentinian II to the western throne, would allow the eastern emperor to act as a paternal regent over the West, a position that might prove useful when the time came to provide a portion of the empire for his second son, Honorius. The three years that Theodosius spent in Italy following the defeat of Maximus show that no matter what the ostensible power situation, Theodosius had no intention of allowing control of the West to slip from his fingers.[12] Finally, in terms of imperial security, the eastern emperor had little choice but to attack Maximus if he did not wish to have a potentially hostile co-emperor in control of the resources of the western empire.[13]

Regardless of Theodosius' actual reasons, his marriage to Valentinian II's sister, Galla, came quickly on the heels of his agreement to help the beleaguered imperial family. The couple seems to have remained in Thessalonica through the fall and winter of 387. Late in the spring of 388,

[11] Persuasively argued by Neil McLynn, "'Genere Hispanus': Theodosius, Spain and Nicene Orthodoxy" in *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives*, ed. Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 77-120. See also Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 159.

[12] Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 37-38.

[13] As suggested by Stephen Williams and Gerard Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 61-62.

Theodosius set out against Magnus Maximus with his land army, while Valentinian and Justina returned to Italy, seeking refuge in Rome. Zosimus seems to suggest that Galla also accompanied her mother and brother on this occasion.[14] The sixth-century chronicler Marcellinus *comes*, however, places Galla in Constantinople in 390, embroiled in a court dispute with her thirteen-year-old stepson, Arcadius.[15] It is therefore probable that in this section Zosimus or his source has confused Galla with one of her sisters, Justa or Grata, and that Galla herself remained behind in the eastern empire after the departure of her family and new husband.[16]

It is possible that Galla had already conceived her first child before the start of the campaign in 388, which would have informed the decision for her to remain in the eastern empire.[17] Galla would ultimately bear at least two, and probably three, children to the Emperor Theodosius, though only her daughter, Placidia, would survive to maturity. In his eulogy for Theodosius

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[14] Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.45.4; 46.1. Zosimus does not mention Galla by name on these occasions, only referring to Justina's daughter (…τῇ Θυγατρὶ…) in the first passage, and her children (…τοῖς παισὶ…) in the second. Nevertheless, as Galla is the only daughter in mentioned his narration of the events of 387/388, the "daughter" in question must refer to Galla. For discussion, see Stewart Irvin Oost, "Some Problems in the History of Galla Placidia", *Classical Philology* 60. 1 (Jan., 1965), 1-10; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 1-2 n. 1. See also Paschoud's commentary in François Paschoud, *Zosime: Histoire nouvelle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979; reprint 2003), II. 2, 440-441.

[15] Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon*, s.a. 390. Galla's age at this time is unknown, as no source records the birth dates of the daughters of Valentinian, the birth order of the children of Valentinian's second wife, Justina, or even the date of Valentinian's second marriage. Aurelius Victor claims that Valentinian raised Gratian to the purple in 367 at the urging of his first wife and Gratian's mother, Marina Severa, suggesting they were still married at this time. See Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 45.4. We also know that Justina's son, Valentinian II, was four years old at his proclamation as Augustus following the death of his father in 375. See, for instance, Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XXX.10.4. This would suggest that Valentinian divorced Marina Severa and married Justina sometime between 368 and 370. Given the extremes of this timeframe for Valentinian's marriage to Justina, Galla could have been anywhere between the ages of fifteen or twenty-two in 390.

[16] As suggested by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 1-2 n. 1; Pashoud, *Zosime* II.2, 440-441; Stefan Rebenich, "Gratian, a Son of Theodosius, and the Birth of Galla Placidia", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 34. 3 (1985), 372-385.

[17] As argued by Oost, "History of Galla Placidia", 1-10; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 48.

delivered in 395, Ambrose of Milan paints the image of Theodosius' arrival in heaven, where he is reunited with the children he had lost on earth. These include Pulcheria, a daughter of Theodosius' first wife Aelia Flacilla, and Gratian, whose name suggests that he was a son of Galla who, like Pulcheria, did not survive childhood.[18] An attested inscription in the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Ravenna, which Placidia founded sometime after 425, also mentions this Gratian as well as an otherwise unknown child named John.[19] Galla is known to have died in childbirth along with her infant in 394.[20] As this John is not attested elsewhere, he may have been the infant who died on this occasion.[21]

No source records the date of Galla Placidia's birth or that of Galla's other offspring. It is possible, however, to narrow the potential dates logically to either 388-389 or 392-393. Such years account for the fact that Theodosius was resident in the western empire from 388 to 391, and also for the conception of the child who died with Galla in 394. The famous letter of Ambrose to Theodosius, rebuking him for the massacre at Thessalonica, however, serves as evidence for the latter of the two possible periods. In closing his letter, Ambrose refers to Theodosius as the "father of Gratian".[22] As the letter was composed in c. 390, this detail suggests that Galla had already given birth to the aforementioned, unfortunate son of Theodosius, who was not destined to survive childhood. Gratian's conception could only have occurred before

[18] Ambrose of Milan, *De obitu Theodosii* 40.

[19] *CIL* XI 276 = *ILS* 818. For a recent discussion of this inscription, see Rebenich, "Gratian, a Son of Theodosius", 372-385.

[20] Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.57.3; John of Antioch, fragment 187.

[21] As suggested by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 56-57, n. 52; Pashoud, *Zosime* II. 2, 440-441; Rebenich, "Gratian, a Son of Theodosius", 372-385.

[22] Ambrose, *Epistula extra collectionem* 11. 17: *An ego Gratiani patrem non oculis meis praeferam?*

Theodosius had left for the West in 388. We should therefore date the birth of Placidia to the period after Theodosius had returned to the eastern empire, in the years 392 or 393.[23]

At some point in her youth, Placidia was given her own household and properties as befitted an imperial princess. In a letter concerning the events of the year 400, Synesius of Cyrene makes a passing reference to a palace in Placidia's possession that had formerly belonged to the *praefectus praetorio* (PPO) Ablabius.[24] The fifth-century *Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae* also records a total of three properties associated with Placidia, a *Palatium Placidianum* and *Domum Placidiae Augustae* in region one and another *Domum Augustae Placidiae* in region ten.[25] From an entry in the *Chronicon Paschale*, we know that at least one of these Constantinopolitan properties still bore Placidia's name as late as the seventh century.[26]

Nevertheless, Placidia was not destined for a happy childhood. In quick succession she lost her brother Gratian, her mother, and her father. The date for Gratian's death is unknown, though based on Ambrose's references to the child, the event seems to have occurred between c. 390 and

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[23] As argued by Rebenich, "Gratian, a Son of Theodosius", 384-385. See also Vito Antonio Sirago, *Galla Placidia: la nobilissima (392-450)* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1996), 13. Rebenich's article is convincing and serves to undermine the previous arguments for a date of 388/389, favored by Bury and Oost. See J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I. to the Death of Justinian* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1923), 198 n. 1; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 48.

[24] Synesius, *Epistula* 61. The date of the letter is traditionally given as 402. See *PLRE* II: Synesius 1. Alan Cameron, however, has argued convincingly that the earthquake mentioned in the letter actually dates to autumn of the year 400. See Alan Cameron, "Earthquake 400," *Chiron* 17 (1987), 332-350; Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 19.

[25] Otto Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum; accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et latercula provinciarum* (Frankfurt am Main: Minerva 1962; First published Berolini: Weidmannos, 1876), 227-243.

[26] *Chronicon Paschale*, s.a. 385.

c. 395.[27] As we have seen, Galla died in childbirth at Constantinople, just before Theodosius set out for another civil war with the western empire in the early summer of 394.[28] Following this successful campaign, the emperor summoned Honorius (the younger of his two sons born of his first wife, Aelia Flacilla) from the east and placed the ten-year-old Augustus on the western throne.[29] The infant Placidia probably traveled with her brother on this journey from Constantinople.[30] Early in the year 395, however, Theodosius' health began to deteriorate. On January 17 he died at Milan before his fiftieth birthday, leaving Placidia and Honorius in the care of his niece and adopted daughter, Serena, and her husband, the general Stilicho.[31]

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[27] Ambrose of Milan *Epistula extra collectionem* 11 was composed in 390 and *De obitu Theodosii* was composed in 395. For the dates, see *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches*, trans. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz and Carole Hill (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 174-177; 262-263.

[28] Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.57.3.

[29] Claudian, *Pangyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti* 92-96; Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.58.1. Zosimus claims that Honorius accompanied his father on the campaign against Eugenius. Claudian, however, is quite clear that he was summoned after the campaign had reached a successful conclusion. As a contemporary source fully immersed in the court of Honorius, scholars have rightly favored Claudian's testimony and reconstruction of events. See, for instance, John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 248; Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 355.

[30] Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii* 34, mentions the arrival of the emperor's children after the campaign against Eugenius. He does not specify, however, which of Theodosius' three children made the trip from Constantinople. Claudian, writing in 404, only mentions Honorius traveling to the western empire in the company of Serena. Claudian, *Pangyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti* 92-96. No source, however, records that Arcadius left the eastern empire during this period. In fact, Theodosius' point in summoning Honorius was apparently to place him in control of the West, as his brother Arcadius was already ruling as Augustus over the East. It therefore seems probable that the children of Theodosius to whom Ambrose refers are Honorius and Galla Placidia. This would also explain why both Honorius and Placidia were under the firm control of Stilicho after 395, while Arcadius remained outside of the general's grasp. For similar conclusions, see Liebeschuetz and Hill, *Ambrose of Milan,* 193 n. 5. See also Seeck, *Untergang*, V. 258; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 60-63; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan,* 355.

[31] For the age of Theodosius, see Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 48.18. The first articulation of Stilicho's guardianship over Honorius appears in Ambrose's *De obitu Theodosii* 5, and would form a vital part of the general's political propaganda. Placidia, however, is not directly named in Ambrose's eulogy. Serena was born sometime before Theodosius' rise to the purple in 379 and took up residence at Constantinople shortly thereafter. See Claudian, *Laus Serenae* 111-114. She married Stilicho in c. 384, after his return from an embassy to Persia. Claudian's text would suggest that she had just reached marriageable age at this time. See Claudian, *De consulate*

According to Stilicho's official propaganda, as articulated in 396 through the poet Claudian's panegyric for the third consulship of Honorius, the emperor Theodosius on his deathbed had entrusted Stilicho, his general and adoptive son-in-law, with the regency for both of his young sons Honorius and Arcadius.[32] Unfortunately for Stilicho, the officials of the eastern court had no intention of relinquishing control over the emperor Arcadius, who had remained in Constantinople. The following three years saw Stilicho's aggressive attempts to extend his influence in the East through intrigue, assassination, and at least two military actions (395 and 397), ostensibly efforts to deal with the renegade forces of Alaric.[33] By 398, however, the two halves of the empire had descended into a situation best described as a "cold war". While still actively hostile, the eastern and western empires largely limited their actions to political posturing for the next decade.[34]

Stilichonis 69-70: *Nubilis interea maturae virginis aetas / urgebat patrias suspenso principe curas…* She may therefore have been born in c. 370, as *PLRE* I: Serena, suggests.

[32] Claudian, *Panegyricus de tertio consulatu Honorii Augusti* 142-162. The propaganda is apparent as early as 395 in Ambrose's *De obitu Theodosii* 5. Ambrose claims that Theodosius entrusted the care of his sons to a relative who was present (*de filiis enim nihil habebat novum quod conderet, quibus totum dederat, nisi ut eos praesenti commendaret parenti…*). For Stilicho as the intended *parens*, see Émilienne Demougeot, *De l'unité à la division de l'Empire romain, 395-410: Essai sur le gouvernement impérial*. (Paris: Adrien-Maison-neuve, 1951), 99-104; Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 38-39; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 258; Liebeschuetz and Hill, *Ambrose of Milan*, 180 n. 2.

[33] For the actions of these years, the best source is Claudian's *In Rufinum*, an invective against Stilicho's eastern rival. For the historical events depicted in Claudian's poem, however, see the essential comments of Cameron, *Claudian*, 63-92. See also Zosimus, *Historia nova* V. 7.

[34] Perhaps the best examples of this "cold war" mentality derive from Stilicho's 397 campaign against Alaric. Stilicho attempted to intervene in the eastern empire through an attack on Alaric, who was at that time ravaging Greece. The eastern court, however, declared Stilicho a public enemy and ordered him to withdraw. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* V. 11. 1. Thereafter, the eastern court also raised Alaric to an official military position over Illyricum. See Claudian, *In Eutropium* II. 211-218. For overviews of this conflict and others, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 270-276 and Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 163-173.

With the East denied to him, Stilicho set out to secure the stability of his regime in the West. Unlike his counterparts in the East, the PPO Rufinus and later the *cubicularius* Eutropius, Stilicho was not content to allow his power to rest on the uncertain grounds of civilian office and personal influence with the emperor Honorius.[35] Since there existed no official position for an imperial regent in Roman government, Stilicho solidified his power through a variety of changes to the administration of the western empire as well as through the introduction of a new titular formula to properly articulate his relationship to the emperor Honorius. As an unforeseen consequence, Stilicho's success laid the foundation for the military dominance of the imperial court, a situation that would persist to a greater or lesser degree until the end of the western empire.

Already in 395 Stilicho had many advantages over his eastern rivals Rufinus and later Eutropius. As the husband of Theodosius' niece and adopted daughter, Serena, he was actually a member of the Theodosian house by marriage. Theodosius had therefore groomed him for high office.[36] Furthermore, unlike his brother Arcadius who was seventeen or eighteen, the emperor Honorius was only ten years of age at his father's death and legally required *tutela*, at least until the age of fourteen.[37] Finally, Stilicho held a military rather than a civilian office, potentially making his dismissal far more difficult, depending on his relationship with the troops.[38]

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[35] See *PLRE* I: Flavius Rufinus 18; *PLRE* II: Eutropius 1.

[36] For the marriage of Serena and Stilicho, see in particular Claudian, *De consulatu Stiliconis* 69-88; Claudian, *Laus Serenae* 159-185. For other sources, see *PLRE* I: Flavius Stilicho; Serena.

[37] Cameron, *Claudian*, 39.

[38] The recent domination of the general Arbogast over the emperor Valentinian II from 391-392 had made the potential for a high-ranking, military official controlling his sovereign abundantly clear. On Arbogast, see Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV. 53; *PLRE* I: Arbogastes.

Regardless of these advantages, Stilicho took further measures to fortify his new position and thereby strengthen his regime. The military administrations of the eastern and western empires were fundamentally different in the late fourth century. In the East, military command was regionally divided between at least five men of more or less equal rank holding the title *magister utriusque militiae* (MVM), indicating that they commanded both infantry and cavalry divisions.[39] In the West, however, only two men, styled *magister peditum praesentalis* (master of the infantry in the emperor's presence) and *magister equitum praesentalis* (master of the cavalry in the emperor's presence), held the highest military ranks, with functional dominion over the entirety of the western empire. This obvious tendency for greater centralization of military power in the West received further support from the fact that, though technically equal, the *magister equitum* was generally subordinate to the *magister peditum*.[40]

Stilicho had risen through the ranks of the military administration of the eastern empire, assuming office of MVM by the year 393.[41] Following the death of Theodosius in 395, Stilicho retained this office which assumed new meaning in the western context. Building on previous tendencies for the functional superiority of the *magister peditum* over the *magister equitum*, Stilicho absorbed the functions of both offices into his new position as *magister utriusque*

[39] There were two MVM *praesentales* stationed in Constantinople and a further three in the regions of Illyricum, Thrace and the East (*Oriens*). See John Michael O'Flynn, *Generalissimos of the Western Roman Empire* (Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1983), 17-18.

[40] A. H. M Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986; originally published by Basil Blackwell Ltd and the University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), I. 174-175.

[41] *Codex Theodosianus* VII.4.18 and VII.9.3, both dated to July 29, 393, address Stilicho as MVM. The exact region under his control is uncertain, though *PLRE* I plausibly suggests Thrace, based on evidence from Claudian, detailing Stilicho's early military victories in this diocese. See *PLRE* I: Flavius Stilicho.

militiae praesentalis. The office of *magister equitum* continued to exist, but in a much reduced role. As *magister militum praesentalis*, Stilicho either appointed or confirmed the appointment of all of the *comites rei militaris* and the *duces* throughout the empire, as well as their subordinate officials.[42] With these changes to the western military administration, Stilicho ensured that the full power of the western Roman military complex centered on his person alone.

Stilicho also used propaganda to articulate his relationship to the sons of Theodosius. Drawing on the general's familial connections to the Theodosian house, the Egyptian poet and court propagandist, Claudian, could explain Stilicho's position in terms of familial values. Claudian therefore depicts Stilicho as a *parens principum*, showing *reverentia* and *pietas* towards the young emperors.[43] The poet also presents Serena as a mother to the emperor Honorius. In addition, Claudian frequently reminds the public that the emperor Theodosius himself assigned the regency of his sons to Stilicho, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of the general's regime.[44]

In 398, a series of military and political setbacks led Stilicho to take a further measure. There is little reason to doubt that Stilicho and Serena had always planned to marry Honorius to one of their daughters. Such an enterprise would not only bind the emperor still closer to his benefactors, but also add the potential for one of their descendants to wear the purple. In 397,

[42] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, I. 174-175; O'Flynn, *Generalissimos*, 18-24.

[43] Cameron has argued convincingly for reading Claudian's political works as the official articulation of the views and aims of Stilicho's regime. See Cameron, *Claudian*, 42-62. For the *parens* rhetoric, see in particular Johannes Straub, "Parens Principum: Stilichos Reichpolitik und das Testament des Kaisers Theodosius", *La Nouvelle Clio* 4 (1952), 94-115.

[44] For example, see Claudian, *Panegyricus de tertio consulatu Honorii Augusti* 142-162; *In Rufinum* II. 4-6; and *Panegyricus de quarto consulatu Honorii Augusti* 432-433. For the fill list of relevant passages and discussion, see Cameron, *Claudian*, 42-43, 49-51, 154.

however, Stilicho launched an abortive expedition against Alaric in Greece that caused the eastern court to label him a public enemy.[45] Stilicho was also forced to deal with the African rebellion of Gildo in this year.[46] Such problems inevitably opened his regime to criticism.[47]

Therefore, in February of 398, political expediency probably caused Stilicho and Serena to rush a marriage between their thirteen-year-old daughter Maria and the emperor Honorius, aged fourteen. While the marriage did serve to strengthen Stilicho's hold over the western empire in a time of crisis, it would ultimately produce no offspring. When Maria died childless in 407, Honorius was quickly married to her younger sister, Thermantia, with the same results. In fact, some authorities claim that when Thermantia was returned to her mother after the fall of Stilicho in 408, the marriage was still unconsummated.[48]

We know little of Galla Placidia's life throughout this ebb and flow of political stability in Stilicho's regime. It is reasonable to assume that she was raised in the household of Serena and

[45] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V. 11. 1.

[46] For Gildo's revolt, see, in particular, Claudian, *De bello Gildonico*; Orosius, *Historiae* VII.36.2-13; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.11.2-4.

[47] As argued by Cameron, *Claudian*, 98-100.

[48] Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 408; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.35.3 and 5. Marcellinus *comes* was an early sixth-century writer from the eastern empire who drew on a variety of fifth-century western sources to compose his chronicle. He is therefore generally reliable for fifth-century events, though he occasionally errs with regard to dates because of the sometimes conflicting dating mechanisms of these earlier, contemporary sources. For Marcellinus *comes*' work, see Brian Croke, *Count Marcellinus and his Chronicle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 170-215; R. W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD, Vol. I: A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2011), 189-191.

received some education as a Roman girl of imperial rank.[49] At some point in her youth, she received the title *nobilissima puella* as a bronze plaque discovered at Rome testifies.[50] The location would suggest that she received this title under Stilicho's regime rather than during her early life in Constantinople. Rome may in fact have been her primary residence in these early years, as she was later among those trapped in the city during the tumultuous events of 408-410.

In his panegyric on the consulship of Stilicho in 400, Claudian hints at the regime's larger dynastic plans through his description of a series of embroidered images on Stilicho's consular robe. The poet describes an image of Serena comforting her daughter Maria, who has just given birth to an imperial heir. Nymphs wash the son of Honorius and Maria in a fountain of gold. In a second image, an older Stilicho teaches the child the arts of war. A third image depicts Stilicho's son Eucherius in a hunting tableau. Finally, an image depicts the goddess Venus conducting a marriage between Eucherius and an unnamed daughter-in-law who is both the "offspring of an emperor and the sister of emperors". Obviously, Galla Placidia is Eucherius' intended bride-to-be.[51]

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[49] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 63-64. Claudian seems to suggest that Serena provided a traditional education in Greek and Latin literature for her daughter Maria. See Claudian, *Epithalamium de nuptiis Honorii Augusti* 231-237.

[50] *L'Année Épigraphique*, 1894, no. 157; Giovanni Battista de Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores: nova series*. 7153.

[51] Claudian, *De consulatu Stilichonis* II.354-357. *Venus hic invecta columbis / tertia regali iungit conubia nexu, / pennatique nurum circumstipantur Amores / progenitam Augustis Augustorumque sororem.* This conclusion is widely accepted in scholarship. See, for instance, Maria Assunta Nagl, *Galla Placidia* (Paderborn, F. Schöningh, 1908), 11-12; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 72-73; Sirago, *La Nobilissima*, 21. Seeck implausibly sees the proposed wedding as an indication that Stilicho desired to raise his son Eucherius to Caesar. See Seeck, *Untergang*, V. 271-272.

Regardless of Stilicho's plans in c. 400 for the further binding of his descendants to the Theodosian house, the union of Eucherius and Galla Placidia would never take place. In his influential biography of Placidia, Stewart Irvin Oost suggests that the marriage was postponed until such time as Honorius and Maria had produced a child. If the wedding of Eucherius and Placidia were to occur before this time, Stilicho's detractors could easily interpret the union as a dynastic threat to the security of the young emperor. This threat would have become even more marked if Eucherius had produced a child with Placidia before Honorius and Maria. It was therefore a political liability.[52]

As a corollary to this plausible hypothesis, Oost further suggests that Stilicho may have deliberately kept Placidia out of the public eye in an attempt to hide the awkward fact that she remained unwed well past the normal age for Roman women.[53] In this way, Stilicho hoped to preserve Placidia for a later marriage to Eucherius. As evidence, Oost cites Placidia's failure to appear in the triumphal procession described in Claudian's *Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti* written in 404, as well as her absence on a *bulla* discovered in the probable tomb of Maria in 1544, bearing the names of the imperial family.[54]

While Oost's hypothesis on the delayed marriage of Placidia and Eucherius is perfectly sound, the second, suggesting that there was some program to hide Placidia, is untenable. With regard to the cited evidence, Serena and her daughter Thermantia are also absent from

[52] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 72-73. Sirago simply suggests that the marriage was postponed until the couple reached maturity. Sirago, *La Nobilissima*, 21.

[53] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 72-73.

[54] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 70-73. For the amulet, see also Cameron, *Claudian*, 48.

Claudian's description of the triumphal procession in 404, and Serena is a far more glaring omission than Placidia. The *bulla*, which Oost describes as bearing the names of the imperial family, is better explained as bearing the names of Maria's family. The inscription reads *Honori, Maria, Stelicho, Serena, vivatis! Stelicho, Serena, Thermantia, Eucheri, vivatis!*[55] Clearly, the engraver chose to acclaim each of Maria's families separately. The first part of the inscription celebrates the imperial family formed by her union with Honorius. The second part celebrates her birth family. The fact that Stilicho and Serena are mentioned as part of the imperial family is simply another piece of evidence for Stilicho's official *parens principum* rhetoric and his close hold over the imperial regime. Placidia's absence is therefore hardly conspicuous. The individuals named had immediate familial ties to Maria, while Placidia, as the sister of her husband, was at least one degree removed.

Furthermore, Stilicho had no reason hide the fact that Placidia remained unmarried. Oost's hypothesis is based on two fallacious assumptions. First, Oost sees Placidia's birth as occurring in 388/389, meaning that she could have been eleven or twelve in 400, the date of Claudian's *De consulatu Stilichonis*, and possibly as old as twenty at Stilicho's death in 408.[56] The work of scholars such as Hopkins, Shaw, and Clark suggest that the typical age range of Roman women at the time of marriage was between twelve and eighteen.[57] By Oost's calculation, Placidia's age

[55] *ILS* 800.

[56] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 48. Bury also accepts this earlier date. See Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198 n. 1.

[57] The minimum legal age for Roman girls to marry was twelve, based on Roman assumptions on the usual beginning of puberty. See *Codex Justinianus* 5.60.3. While Hopkins has shown that such laws had a precedents dating back to the early empire, he also shows that there is an abundance of evidence for the women of aristocratic families marrying before this age. In general, however, drawing on previous studies of epigraphic evidence, he suggests a rough marriage age of 12-18 for Roman women, in which women of pagan families married younger than those of Christian families. See M. K. Hopkins, "The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage", *Population Studies* 18:3 (March, 1965), 309-327. Shaw and Clark have pointedly criticized Hopkins' notions of religious persuasion playing a role in marriage age, though this general age range seems to stand. See Brent D. Shaw, "The Family in Late

in 408 would therefore seem to fall outside this "normal" range. As we have seen, however, it is far more likely that Placidia was born in 392 or 393.[58] She could therefore have been only fifteen or sixteen at Stilicho's death in 408. As such, she was perfectly within the typical age range for Roman marriage practices. This latter date for Placidia's birth therefore undermines Oost's hypothesis that Placidia's unmarried status under Stilicho's regime was somehow abnormal, requiring her seclusion from public view.

A far more important objection to Oost's argument arises from an examination of imperial marriage practices in the late fourth and fifth centuries. Since the reign of Valentinian I, the daughters of the imperial house had traditionally adopted a life of celibacy. While we do not know the personal motivations of all of these women, this dynastic tradition in general possessed clear advantages in both the political and religious spheres. On the one hand, the adoption of chastity as a Christian ascetic practice offered these women new opportunities for the exercise of political and religious influence. On the other, the fact that the daughters of the reigning imperial house remained unwed served to both secure and protect the main line of male dynastic descent.

This tradition was broken only on rare and politically significant occasions. Iusta, Grata, and Galla, the daughters of Valentinian I, led celibate lives during their father's lifetime. While Galla later married Theodosius I in 387, this marriage was to an acknowledged member of the imperial college and, as we have seen, undertaken in dire circumstances for the sole purpose of preserving

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Antiquity: The Experience of Augustine", *Past and Present* 115 (May, 1987), 2-51; Gillian Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity: Pagan and Christian Life-Styles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 80-81.

[58] As argued by Sirago, *La Nobilissima*, 13; Rebenich, "Gratian, a Son of Theodosius", 384-385.

the power of her brother Valentinian II. Iusta and Grata, however, continued to maintain their celibate lifestyles under Valentinian II's regime.[59]

This practice also seems to have informed the later experience of Honoria, Galla Placidia's daughter and the sister of the emperor Valentinian III. Honoria was born in 417/418 to Placidia and Honorius' general Constantius. Sometime in the late 440s, she was discovered having sexual relations with one of her ministers, a man named Eugenius. In the court scandal that followed, Eugenius was put to death, while Honoria appealed to the Hunnic king Attila for aid. The result was a dangerous diplomatic crisis.[60] While this episode is interesting for a variety of reasons, in the present discussion, the significant factor in Honoria's experience is that she had remained unmarried well into her later twenties or early thirties. Though Honoria chose to reject celibacy, her age on this occasion would suggest that she had previously adhered to this dynastic tradition under the regime of Valentinian III.

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[59] Socrates Scholasticus maintains that Iusta and Grata remained virgins, while Galla married Theodosius. See Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* IV.31.17. In general, see *PLRE* I: Iusta 1 and Grata. Socrates was a layman who composed his Nicene church history, which ends in 439, in the eastern empire under the reign of Theodosius II. He was therefore a rough contemporary for many of the events he describes. The author's use of both ecclesiastical as well as secular sources further commend him as a more or less reliable testimony for contemporary events, depending on the general themes of church history and his own overall thesis of the interrelationship between church and state. For a good introduction to Socrates' work, see Hartmut Leppin, "Church Historians I: Socrates, Sozomenus and Theodoretus", in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* ed. Gabriele Marasco (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 219-254.

[60] The best primary source for this scandal is Priscus, Blockley fragment 17 = John of Antioch, fragment 199.2. Marcellinus *comes* places the event in 434. See Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 434. Bury, however, argued convincingly for a date of 449, and his this year has generally been accepted in modern scholarship. See Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 288-289; Timo Stickler, *Aëtius: Gestaltungsspielräume eines Heermeisters im ausgehenden Weströmischen Reich* (München: Beck, 2002), 125-134. Priscus was a mid-fifth century diplomat of the eastern empire who traveled widely, establishing contacts with important officials in the western empire. Much of his history derives from his own first-person accounts of the events, perhaps most famously, his embassy to the court of Attila the Hun in 448/449. Though his work only survives in fragments, often embedded in later histories such as John of Antioch, he remains one of our best sources for the fifth-century events. For an overview of Priscus' work, see Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, I. 43-70.

Finally, Aelia Pulcheria, Arcadia, and Marina, the daughters of the emperor Arcadius, are also known to have embraced celibacy during the lifetime of their brother, Theodosius II.[61] Unlike our previous examples, however, the inherent religious aspect of this dynastic tradition is more pronounced in our sources for these women. This fact seems largely due to Pucheria's overwhelming success in translating her religious lifestyle into an effective tool in the political sphere.[62] While Arcadia and Marina are little more than names in our sources, Pucheria emerges as one of the dominant political actors in the eastern empire during the fifth century.

All of these examples would suggest that the dynasties of Valentinian and Theodosius maintained a tradition of celibacy for the sisters of reigning emperors. Beyond the inherent religious implications of tradition, recent history would certainly have informed the adoption of such practices for the security of the reigning emperor. The revolt of Procopius in 365-366 had displayed the problems that could arise if auxiliary branches of the imperial family were allowed

[61] The main source for Pulcheria, Arcadia, and Marina's decision to adopt the religious practice of celibacy and Pulcheria's subsequent career is Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.1. For further source references, see *PLRE* II: Aelia Pulcheria, Arcadia 1, and Marina 1. Sozomen was a lawyer and Christian layman who composed his church history in the later 440s. He seems to have traveled widely as well as possessed contacts in the eastern imperial court. As sources for his history, he relied on a variety of works, including the previous church history of Socrates as well as the work of Olympiodorus. Olympiodorus' work particularly dominates the unfinished ninth book of his history. As such, Sozomen's history offers a generally reliable testimony for early fifth-century events. For Sozomen's work, see Leppin, "Church Historians I", 219-254.

[62] Oost directly suggests that the sisters of Theodosius II adopted celibacy both from Christian piety and to avoid problems with the imperial succession. He does not, however, tie the practice to an overall imperial program or reference the previous examples of the sisters of Valentinian II. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 178. Holum notes the obvious political undertones in Sozomen's account of Pulcheria, particularly the fact that her proclamation of religious celibacy was a public event and that she took this step at least partially to support her brother's rule. See Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1982), 92-95. Chew also attempts to insert Pulcheria's actions into the political events of Theodosius II's reign, though with some questionable conclusions. See Kathryn Chew, "Virgins and Eunuchs: Pulcheria, Politics and the Death of Emperor Theodosius II", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 55. 2 (2006), 207-227.

to ramify, as had the Constantinian family politics of the 310s and 337.[63] In addition, it was not beyond the realm of possibility that an overly ambitious husband might use his marriage to the emperor's sister to launch his own claim for the throne, as would happen in 421 with Constantius III and in 451 with the Emperor Marcian.[64] In terms of imperial tradition, the radical element in Stilicho's policy, as expressed in Claudian's panegyric, was therefore not that Placidia would one day marry Eucherius, but that Placidia would marry at all.[65]

Galla Placidia's first steps onto the historical stage occurred in the aftermath of Stilicho's fall. The eastern emperor Arcadius died of unknown causes on May 1, 408. Honorius, as senior emperor, wished to travel to Constantinople and supervise his nephew Theodosius II's assumption of the eastern throne. Stilicho, however, decided to use this occasion to extend his power into the east, thus finally realizing his old claims to regency in both the east and the west. Using the rise of the usurper Constantine III in Gaul as a pretext, he convinced Honorius that the legitimate emperor must remain in Italy for the safety of his regime. Stilicho, himself, would go to the East and supervise affairs.[66]

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[63] For the revolt of Procopius, who was a maternal cousin of the Emperor Julian, the main account is Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XXVI. 6-9. For other evidence and citations, see *PLRE* I: Procopius 4.

[64] For the circumstances surrounding the rise of Constantius III to the purple, see Chapter 6. For Marcian's marriage to Pulcheria following the death of her brother Theodosius II, see Hydatius, *Chronicon* 139 [147]; Evagrius Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* II.1.

[65] Claudian, *De consulatu Stilichonis* II. 354-357.

[66] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.31.3-6. Zosimus' value as a reliable historian for fifth-century events increases substantially after he adopts the work of the contemporary historian Olympiodorus of Thebes as his primary source for the years 407-410. For Zosimus' relationship with Olympiodorus and his source material in general, see above note 1.

Unfortunately, Stilicho had chosen to extend his power to the East when his hold over the western empire was already slipping. In 406, groups of Suebi, Vandals, and Alans had crossed the Rhine frontier and moved as they pleased through the northern Gallic provinces.[67] The seeming inability of Ravenna to deal with this situation may have led to the rise of the usurper Constantine III, who succeeded in bringing much of the Gallic aristocracy under his sway and forcing Honorian loyalists to flee to Italy for refuge.[68] Further, Stilicho's dealings with Alaric and his make-shift army had come to a head in 407, when the barbarian leader appeared on the Italian frontier demanding four thousand pounds of gold for his recent work in Illyricum. Stilicho had managed to push the necessary tax burden onto the disgruntled Roman senate, but the victory only served to rouse further enemies among their number.[69]

Stilicho's plans for the East gave his critics the opportunity they needed to orchestrate his downfall. The *magister scrinii*, Olympius, seems to have led the charge.[70] A rumor began to circulate claiming that Stilicho was planning to seize the eastern empire and raise his own son Eucherius to the purple, in place of the rightful heir, Theodosius II. A mutiny broke out among

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[67] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.3; Prosper, *Chronicon* s. a. 406; Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 9. See Chapter 2 for estimations of these authors as reliable witnesses for fifth-century events.

[68] *PLRE* II: Fl. Claudius Constantinus 21. For discussion, see J. F. Drinkwater, "The Usurpers Constantine III (407-411) and Jovinus (411-413)", *Britannia* 29 (1998), 269-298; Michael Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain" *Britannia* 31 (2000), 325-345.

[69] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.29.5-9.

[70] For Olympius and his role in the plot against Stilicho, see in particular Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 5.1 = Müller-Dindorf 1.2; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.32.1-7. The eastern historian Philostorgius offers a different version of Olympius' coup, stating that Olympius deflected Stilicho's attempt to assassinate Honorius. See Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* XII.1.The story has no parallel in other sources, though it is very much in keeping with the anti-Stilichonian propaganda which saturates many sources after the fall of the general in 408. See, for instance, Jerome, *Epistula* 123. 16; Rutilius Namatianus, *De Reditu Suo*, 41-60; Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 38; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon*, s.a. 408.

the troops at Ticinium (modern Pavia) in northern Italy on August 8, 408, resulting in a general purge of Stilicho's adherents.[71] When attempts to reclaim the situation failed, Stilicho took refuge in a church in Ravenna. On August 22, he emerged under false promises of safety and the waiting military entourage promptly put him to death.[72] His executioner, Heraclianus, was rewarded for this perfidy with the office of *comes Africae*.[73] In the coming days, Stilicho's son Eucherius was also killed in Rome.[74] His daughter Thermantia, who had been married to Honorius after Maria's death in 407, was sent back to her mother, Serena, in Rome.[75]

The court coup was a bloody affair and the list of notables who met their end in the general purge is long.[76] Unfortunately for those who planned and implemented this plot, their actions only served to initiate further turmoil for the western empire. The new regime of Olympius was fractured and unstable at a time when the West required firm leadership. With Stilicho and his adherents dead or persecuted, many now saw the opportunity to seize the general's former status as the dominant force in the western empire. One of these was Alaric, whose army was still encamped just outside of Italy. The bloodthirsty practices of Olympius' regime, including the slaughter of the families of barbarian troops, caused Alaric's army to swell with large numbers of

[71] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.32.1-7.

[72] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.34.3-7.

[73] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.37.6.

[74] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.37.4-6; Oympiodorus, Blockley fragment 7. 3 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 6.

[75] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.37.5-6.

[76] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.32.4-7. For the individuals, see *PLRE* II: Limenius (PPO *Galliarum*), Chariobaudes (MVM *per Gallias*), Vincentius 1 (*magister equitum*), Salvius 1 (*comes domesticorum*), Naimorius (*magister officiorum*), Patroinus (*comes sacrarum largitionum*), Salvius 2 (*quaestor sacri palatii*), Longinianus (PPO *Italiae*) and others unnamed. Unfortunately, we know very little of these men beyond the offices they held.

Roman and non-Roman soldiers. The Gothic general entered Italy and through three successive sieges from 408-410, attempted to use the imperial city of Rome as a bargaining chip in his negotiations with the court of Honorius. If a strong hand had controlled Ravenna, Alaric might have conducted successful negotiations, thus sparing Rome from the fateful sack it would endure in August of 410. Unfortunately for all involved, Alaric's aggression only served to aggravate internal pressures and further destabilize the post-Stilichonian regime.

More than once, confusion and power struggles within the imperial court thwarted negotiations. Olympius fell from power sometime in 409, only to be restored a short time later. The *magister officiorum* was then beaten to death probably in late 410 or 411 at the command of Honorius' new handler and future co-emperor, Constantius III.[77] Jovius, the praetorian prefect of Italy, seems to have controlled Honorius after the first fall of Olympius. Jovius, however, was also a friend of Alaric because of their mutual service in the regime of Stilicho. When his loyalty to Honorius was questioned, he therefore took an oath never to make peace with the Gothic general. Unfortunately, this oath led him to reject Alaric's reasonable demands in the second round of negotiations.[78]

Under the stress of siege and famine, the Roman Senate abandoned the ineffectual regime of Honorius in late 409 and colluded with Alaric to raise a usurper from among their own number, a distinguished senator named Priscus Attalus. When this tactic eventually proved no more effective in realizing Alaric's goals, Alaric stripped Attalus and his officials of their imperial regalia in the early summer of 410. In the third and final round of negotiations with Honorius, a

[77] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 8. 2 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 8.

[78] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.7.

personal enemy of Alaric in the emperor's employ, a Goth named Sarus, launched a fateful, unplanned attack on the general's delegation.[79] In frustration at almost three years of unfulfilled negotiations, Alaric laid siege to Rome for the third time in the summer of 410. On August 24, the imperial city fell, probably to internal treachery, and Alaric's motley forces spent three days looting the riches of centuries.[80]

During this tumultuous period, Galla Placidia moved for the first time from a mere name in the background of honorific writing to a participant in Roman political life. Zosimus tells us that shortly after Alaric's first siege of Rome in 408, the senate came to believe that Serena had summoned the Gothic general as revenge for the murder of her husband, Stilicho, and her son, Eucherius. For this reason, "…it seemed best both to all the senate in common and to Placidia, the sister of the emperor by the same father, that she [Serena] be killed...."[81] They believed that Alaric would withdraw from Rome upon Serena's death, as there would then be no one to betray the city. While Zosimus states that Serena's execution was, in one sense, due justice for her previous desecration of the temple of Rhea, the historian nevertheless wholly absolves her of guilt regarding the rumored collusion with Alaric.[82]

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[79] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.3; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.3.

[80] For a general narrative of the fall of Stilicho and the years 408-410, see Seeck, *Untergang*, V. 385-416; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 409-427; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 280-300; Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 171-177. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed examination of the factional struggles in the court of Honorius during these years.

[81] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.38.1: …ἐδόκει κοινῇ τῇ τε γερουσίᾳ πάσῃ καὶ Πλακιδίᾳ τῇ ὁμοπατρίᾳ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀδελφῇ ταύτην ἀναιρεθῆναι…

[82] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V. 38. 1-5. Serena's death is also noted in a fragment of Olympiodorus, though the author does not mention Placidia or the senate's involvement. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 7. 3 = Müller-Dindorf 1.6. For the episode of Serena as part of the frequent theme of divine retribution for actions against the traditional gods of Rome in Zosimus' work, see Paschoud, *Cinq Études sur Zosime*, 125-147.

Zosimus' attestation of Placidia's involvement in the decision to execute Serena raises important questions regarding her motivations. It is certainly possible, as Zosimus suggests, that Placidia truly believed that Serena had summoned Alaric and that her death would end the siege of Rome. Nevertheless, the fact remains that after the death of her father, Placidia had been raised in the house of her cousin and foster sister. Why then, as a young woman of fifteen or sixteen, would Placidia agree on such a horrible end for someone who for all intents and purposes, had acted as her own mother?

While the sources provide no evidence concerning the relationship between Placidia and Serena, scholars have generally concluded that Placidia's actions on this occasion suggest that she possessed a deep hatred of her foster mother.[83] This hypothesis is certainly possible. As we have seen, Honorius and Galla Placidia had spent their lives as little more than pawns in regime of Stilicho and Serena. The early marriage of Honorius to Maria, the planned union of Eucherius and Placidia, and the hasty marriage of Maria's sister Thermantia to the emperor following Maria's death in 407, all served as props to a regime whose claims to regency had grown ludicrous well before Honorius reached the age of twenty-four in 408. Placidia and Honorius may have recognized this manipulation as they grew to maturity, resulting in a consequent hatred of Stilicho and Serena. This hatred, in turn, may have caused Placidia and Honorius to consent to the execution of Stilicho, Serena, and Eucherius in 408. At the very least, it may have informed

[83] Demougeot simply suggests that Placidia's hatred developed in her early life under Serena's control. See Demougeot, *De l'unité,* 429. Oost offers a more elaborate hypothesis. In keeping with his aforementioned thesis that the regime of Stilicho and Serena deliberately kept Placidia out of the public eye, Oost suggests that Placidia grew jealous of the exalted status that Serena and her daughters enjoyed in public life. Over time, this jealously grew into hatred which caused Placidia to believe the treasonous, though unfounded, accusations against Serena. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 85-86.

the siblings' apparent willingness to believe the treasonous rumors regarding these individuals which circulated in both Ravenna and Rome at this time.[84]

Scholars who support this hypothesis therefore read the meager evidence of Zosimus as evidence of Placidia's formal acquisition of power. Bury and Sirago present her actively involved in senatorial deliberations concerning Serena's case.[85] Scholars such Demougeot and Lütkinhaus suggest that she was a principle member of political factions within the city.[86]

Nevertheless, while it is tempting to read Zosimus' account as evidence for Placidia's active rise to political power at this time, it is more plausible to believe that her participation in the decision to execute Serena was the result of senatorial coercion or intimidation.[87] Serena's execution took place when Rome was already in panic over Alaric's first siege. Zosimus clearly tells us that the senate believed that Serena was guilty of summoning Alaric. Both the senate and people probably also desired a scapegoat, and Serena's execution was perfectly in keeping with the policies of Olympius' new regime in Ravenna.[88] Unlike Stilicho, however, Serena was a blood relative of the emperor and member of the Theodosian house. Few would dare to end her life without the express approval of Honorius, and a barbarian army under the command of Alaric stood between Rome and Ravenna. The emperor was effectively out of reach.

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[84] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 86.

[85] See J. B. Bury, "Justa Grata Honoria", *The Journal of Roman Studies* 9 (1919), 1-13; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 84-85.

[86] Demougeot sees Placida as a member of an anti-German faction in Rome. See Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 429. Lütkenhaus offer the far more radical (and improbable) suggestion that Placidia headed a pro-homoean senatorial faction. See Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 73-80. For a discussion of Lütkenhaus' views, see Chapter 3.

[87] As suggested by Nischer-Falkenhof, *Stilicho*, 154. Nischer-Falkenhof does not go into detail regarding his claims. He merely suggests that Placidia was made to submit to the senatorial decision.

[88] Sirago, *La Nobilissima*, 22-23, makes the point that the execution of Serena showed Roman unity with the Honorian regime in a time of crisis.

In this situation, it is reasonable to assume that the Senate turned towards self-help in much the same way as they would in 409 with the usurpation of Priscus Attalus. The consent of Galla Placidia, also trapped in the city, was the closest the Roman senators could get to imperial approval for their actions against Serena. Placidia herself was only fifteen or sixteen years old in the autumn of 408. She had lived in Serena's household since her early childhood and we have no reason to doubt that Serena played a maternal role in her life. These facts alone make it difficult to accept that she would actively pursue Serena's death on her own initiative.

There is also some reason to think that Placidia may have feared for her own safety in 408. The on-going purges of Stilicho's family and followers may have seemed haphazard and threatening to one so close to these individuals. Furthermore, Alaric's siege of Rome brought this already tense political atmosphere to a fever pitch and opened the very real possibility of urban violence. Finally, the senate's accusations against Serena would have shown Placidia that even members of the imperial house were unsafe in the current political climate. Under these circumstances, the senate would have found Placidia quite susceptible to intimidation or coercion. Her agreement to the execution of Serena would therefore owe little to her own initiative.

While we ultimately cannot know Placidia's motivations for this action, it is far more probable to assume that she merely gave her consent to the senate's decision. Zosimus is clear that the senators were acting on their own beliefs regarding Serena's collusion with Alaric. Placidia is only mentioned in the decision to execute her cousin. Zosimus' account therefore cannot support the arguments of some scholars who suggest that Placidia was a formidable and independent political actor at this time. While Zosimus' text does suggest that the senate

acknowledged her authority as a member of the imperial house, there is good reason to suspect that Placidia merely gave her assent to the senatorial decision.

The real threat to Placidia's safety, however, came late in 409. In December of this year, the starved and weary citizens of Rome decided to reject the apparently incompetent rule of Honorius and ally themselves with Alaric. After two successive sieges, Alaric had accomplished nothing in his negotiations with Ravenna. He therefore chose a different tactic. Alaric raised the prestigious urban prefect Priscus Attalus to the purple with the consent of the Roman Senate, some of whom filled the ranks of the usurper's new regime. Alaric himself assumed Stilicho's former office as MVM *praesentalis*.[89] Together, general and usurper moved to wrench the chaotic government of the western empire from the feeble hands of Honorius.

Unfortunately, Alaric quickly found that Attalus had a mind of his own. The usurper refused to take Alaric's advice on the conquest of Africa. Instead of a troop of non-Romans, Attalus believed that a mere embassy would bring Africa under his control. In this assumption, he was sorely mistaken. The *comes Africae*, Heraclian, remained faithful to Honorius. He put Attalus' messenger and new *comes Africae*, Constans, to death.[90] The count then placed an embargo on the African grain shipments to Rome, causing a more devastating famine than even Alaric had managed. Attalus, however, still opposed sending barbarian troops to Africa.[91]

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[89] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 6 = Müller-Dindorf 1.3; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.7.1; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX. 8; Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.7; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.3; Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 10.5; Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 409; Procopius, *Wars* I.2.28. Zosimus details the aristocrats who assumed office under Attalus in 409. See *PLRE* I: Marcianus 1, PVR. *PLRE* II: Tertullus 1, consul; Postumius Lampadius, PPO; Jovius, PPO *et patricius*; Valens 2, *magister equitum*; Constans 2, *comes Africae*.

[90] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.7.6; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.8.

[91] Zosimus, *Historia nova*, VI.11.1-2; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.8.

Negotiations with Honorius proved no more successful. Attalus led his troops against Ravenna in order to secure his position as emperor of the west. Honorius now realized the futility of his position. He offered to recognize Attalus as his co-regent, a delaying action that had previously worked with the usurper, Constantine III. Attalus, however, refused to accept anything less than Honorius' complete deposition.[92] The situation changed dramatically, however, through the unexpected arrival of four thousand eastern troops at Ravenna sent from Honorius' nephew, Theodosius II. Honorius now felt himself strong enough to reject further negotiations with the usurper.[93] Once again, Alaric found himself blocked from realizing his goals.

In early summer of 410, either as a good faith measure or as the price of reopening negotiations, Alaric formally demoted Attalus and once again recognized the authority of Honorius.[94] Both sides now prepared to return to the bargaining table. Unfortunately for all, Sarus, a Goth in Honorius' service, launched an independent attack that almost succeeded in killing or capturing Alaric.[95] This attack marked the end of over two years of talks and the ultimate failure of the barbarian general. Rome was besieged for a third time at the beginning of summer, 410. On August 24, the city fell. After three days of looting, Alaric led his army south

[92] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 14 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 13; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.8.1.

[93] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.8.2-3; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.8.

[94] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 14 = Müller-Dindorf 1.13; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.1-2; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.8; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.3.

[95] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.13.1-2; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.9.2-5, Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.3.

in possession of massive amounts of wealth as well as important hostages. One of these was the emperor's sister, Galla Placidia.[96]

With the Roman rebellion against Honorius in December of 409, Placidia's situation became far more dangerous. Regardless of the futility of Attalus' rule in hindsight, there is little reason to doubt that Alaric, Attalus, and the Roman Senate were deadly serious in their imperial pretensions. Attalus' refusal to accept anything less than the deposition of Honorius speaks to the overwhelming confidence of the new regime. As such, Galla Placidia necessarily found herself in a precarious position.

The uncertainty of Galla Placidia's situation is reflected in the writings of Zosimus. Most sources associate Alaric's capture of Galla Placidia with the fall and sack of Rome in August of 410.[97] Zosimus, however, suggests that Placidia was already in Alaric's custody in the early summer of 410. After describing the incidents surrounding the deposition of Attalus, the author notes that Alaric nevertheless retained the usurper and his son, Ampelius, for their own safety until a peace agreement could be established with Honorius. Along with these men, Alaric also held Galla Placidia in the manner of a hostage. Zosimus assures his readers, however, that the sister of the emperor continued to enjoy all of the honors of her imperial rank.[98]

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[96] For an overview of the rise and fall of Attalus, see Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 448-462; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 302-305, Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 174-176.

[97] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.2; VII.43.2; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 6 = Müller-Dindorf 1.3; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 410; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 36 [44]. Jordanes, *Getica* 159-160 implausibly claims that Athaulf sacked Rome a second time as he passed the city on the way out of Italy. The author attributes Placidia's abduction to this second attack. For discussion and dismissal of Jordanes' account, see Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 125-126.

[98] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.3.

While Zosimus' testimony stands in stark contrast to every other source that records the captivity of Galla Placidia, there are reasons to see it as the most reliable reconstruction of events, not least the fact that in the last surviving chapter of his work, Zosimus draws on the reliable, and almost contemporary, historian Olympiodorus. Zosimus presents our most detailed account of the plight of Rome from 408-410, though his work ends before Alaric's sack of the imperial city. The numerous other sources that record Placidia's captivity offer generalized overviews of these years.[99] The authors may therefore have simply telescoped separate, but close chronological events into the single, momentous incident of 410, the sack of Rome.

In light of the political vicissitudes of these years, Zosimus' account also offers the most historically plausible reconstruction of Placidia's captivity. Neither Alaric nor the Roman Senate could have failed to recognize the advantage that the possession of Placidia offered to their endeavors. Honorius remained secure behind the marshes and walls of Ravenna. His sister had no such protection. Though the negotiations had turned towards the deposition of Honorius after 409, Placidia's person would still have remained a valuable bargaining chip with the imperial court. As Placidia was present in Rome, it is difficult to believe that Alaric and/or the Senate would have failed to exploit this obvious asset.[100]

The captivity of Placidia need not have meant that she was a resident in Alaric's camp from December, 409. The alliance between Alaric and the Roman Senate meant that the two were acting as one in their negotiations with Ravenna, until the failure of Attalus' rule became

[99] For discussion, see Paschoud's commentary on Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.3, in Paschoud, *Zosime*, III.2, 64-65.

[100] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 93-94, 94 n. 23; Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2. 64-65.

apparent. Placidia may therefore have remained under "house arrest" after the usurpation of Attalus, a practice sometimes allowed for high status prisoners.[101] As Zosimus suggests, only when the alliance between Alaric and the Senate broke down in the summer of 410 was it necessary to transfer Placidia into Alaric's direct control.

What effect, if any, the captivity of Placidia had on Alaric's negotiations with Honorius is unknown. Though the imperial court would make demands for her return after the sack of Rome in August of 410, the sources make no mention of her in the negotiations before this incident. Nevertheless, some trace may remain beneath the surface of events. In his commentary on Zosimus, François Paschoud argues that the emperor became much more conciliatory to Alaric following the rise of Attalus in December, 409. In his opinion, this change came because Alaric now held Galla Placidia as a hostage.[102] Unfortunately, Paschoud provides no extended argument or examples to support his thesis, and any change in negotiation tactics on the part of Honorius is debatable. Though Honorius initially offered Attalus co-regency, the demands of Attalus and Alaric for the emperor's deposition and possible mutilation effectively ended negotiations for the duration of the usurper's rule. When the unexpected arrival of four thousand eastern troops restored equilibrium to the power struggle, Honorius felt strong enough (or was deemed strong enough) to require Alaric to abandon his usurper in order to return to the bargaining table.[103]

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[101] For a later example, see Sidonius Apollinaris' account of the trial of Arvandus in *Epistula* I.7.

[102] Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2. 64-65.

[103] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.2 & Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.3 suggest that Alaric demoted Attalus as a measure of good faith before he reopened negotiations with Honorius. Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IX.8, however, has Honorius require Alaric to demote Attalus in order to obtain a peace treaty. Since both authors are here independently drawing on Olympiodorus, it is difficult to know which account more accurately reflects that original source.

There is therefore little reason to suggest that Honorius became more amenable to Alaric over the long term.

Nevertheless, Honorius' initial offer of co-rule with Attalus may suggest something more than a weakened political and military standing. In 409, the emperor had reached a similar agreement extending the offer of shared dominion with the Gallic usurper, Constantine III. Not only did he recognize Constantine as co-emperor; he also provided the usurper with imperial vestments. Though military weakness was probably a factor in his decision, Honorius was also reacting to the fact that Constantine held members of his family captive, or so Zosimus tells us. What Honorius did not realize, however, was that the usurper had already put these relatives to death.[104]

In 410, the emperor sent high-status envoys and made the same offer of co-rule to Priscus Attalus.[105] The fact that Honorius took the initiative in this action may suggest that the emperor was applying a previous solution to similar circumstances. Military weakness was certainly a factor in 410, as it had been in 409. In the latter case, however, it was the captivity of relatives that pushed Honorius to recognize a usurper. Alaric's captivity of Galla Placidia would therefore explain why he jumped to the same dramatic concession in attempted to placate the usurper Attalus in 410.

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[104] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.43.1-2. See *PLRE* II: Verenianus and Didymus. These relatives had led a makeshift army against the forces of Constantine III and Constans, who had spread their influence into Spain. Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 281-282, shows that these Spain initially accepted the control of the usurpers, until Verenianus and Didymus launched their rebellion.

[105] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.8.1; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.8.

Regardless of when her captivity began, Galla Placidia was certainly among the prominent individuals in Alaric's army when this force left Rome on August 27, 410, and moved into Campania. After a failed attempt to invade Sicily, Alaric fell ill and died near the city of Consentia. Athaulf, Alaric's lieutenant and brother-in-law, now took command of the motley force.[106]

This army remained in southern Italy for the following two years, uncertain of its future, unsettled, and raiding for necessary supplies.[107] The sources, however, record no military or diplomatic action between Athaulf and the imperial court during this period. Nevertheless, it might be safe to assume that negotiations of some sort took place. In addition to extensive material wealth, the army had also taken hostages of high birth from the city of Rome. The presence of these captives would have placed Athaulf and his officers in contact with many of the great Italian families, who would have wished to negotiate ransoms for their unfortunate kin. In addition, they still possessed their most valuable captive, Galla Placidia. Fear for the safety of these people among the barbarian army may have caused some hesitation on the part of the imperial court. If Athaulf gained some advantage from this situation, however, the details are lost to history.

In truth, the problem of Athaulf and his army had moved to the back of Ravenna's priorities by 411. The imperial court may have feared for the safety of the emperor's sister in an attack or

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[106] Olympiodorus, fragment 11. 2 & 16; Jordanes, *Getica* 156-158. For discussion, see Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 112-113.

[107] *Codex Theodosianus* XI.28.7 dated May 8, 413, grants tax remissions for the southern provinces of Campania, Apulia, Calabria, Bruttium, and Lucania, as well as the central provinces of Samnium, Tuscia and Picenum; XI.28. 12, dated November 15, 418, continues partial tax remissions for Campania. Oost and Wolfram see these laws as the direct result of the depredations of Alaric's forces in the regions. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 104 n. 67; Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988; first published as *Geschichte der Goten* by Beck, 1979) 161, 440 n. 272.

simply decided that the barbarians were incapable of doing more damage to the Italian peninsula than they already had. A more probable explanation, however, is the fact that emperors traditionally placed the dynastic challenge of a usurper on a higher level of importance than foreign and domestic threats to the Roman citizenry. The imperial court of Honorius was no different. The retreat of the barbarian army from the vicinity of Ravenna meant that the emperor now had breathing room to deal with the usurpers in Gaul. It is also possible that Honorius' new *magister militum* Constantius, following the vision of his predecessor, Stilicho, was already entertaining the notion of recruiting Athaulf and his forces for Ravenna's benefit in the immediate future. In any case, the imperial court in 411 had apparently decided that the problem of Athaulf and his barbarians could wait for the time being.

Galla Placidia would remain a hostage among Athaulf's forces for the next three years. Zosimus assures us that she received all of the respect due her station while among the forces of Alaric, and this good treatment probably continued under the rule of Athaulf.[108] Nevertheless, we can hardly doubt that these years of wandering captivity were at least initially traumatic for the Roman princess. At some point during this period, however, Placidia came to realize or was convinced of the inherent opportunities such a situation afforded her own ambitions. As we will see in Chapter 3, her conscious decision to embrace these opportunities would have dramatic consequences for her own future as well as the political life of the western Roman empire.

[108] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.3.

Chapter 2: Usurpers in Gaul

The Gallic provinces faced their own challenges in the first decade of the fifth century. Severe threats to Italy under Stilicho's regime, specifically the invasions of Alaric (401-402) and of an otherwise unknown Gothic leader named Radagaisus (405-406), forced the *magister utriusque militiae* (MVM) to severely reduce the military forces of Gaul in order to supply men for the defense of the Italian peninsula. This action resulted in both the invasion of non-Roman groups from beyond the Rhine *limes* and the usurpation of imperial authority within Gaul.

In 406, groups of Alans, Vandals, and Suebi crossed the Rhine and spread devastation in northern Gallic provinces. This event coincided with the rise of a series of usurpers in Britain. Constantine III, the last of these British usurpers, crossed into Gaul in early 407, confined the trans-Rhenish raiders in the northern provinces of Belgica Prima and Belgica Secunda, and quickly succeeded in establishing his control over almost the entire Gallic prefecture. From his headquarters at Arles, he also attempted to extend his influence into the Italian sphere. In return for Constantine's promise of aid against Alaric, who was then occupying Italy, Honorius recognized the usurper as an imperial colleague early in the year 409.

Constantine's fortunes began to decline, however, just after he obtained Honorius' recognition. In Spain, Constantine's general Gerontius rebelled from his master's control and raised his own usurper, Maximus, to the purple. The general also encouraged the 406 invaders to once again take up their depredations. Gerontius' actions and the repeated failure of Constantine's son and co-Augustus, Constans, in bringing the general to heel fundamentally weakened Constantine's regime. Britain and Armorica withdrew their support for the Gallic emperor in 409. Constantine's fruitless attempt to intervene militarily in Italian affairs in 410

also ended his efforts to establish control over Honorius and the imperial court at Ravenna. By the spring of 411, two consecutive armies besieged Constantine at Arles. Gerontius first succeeded in killing Constans and trapping Constantine inside his Gallic stronghold. Gerontius' forces withdrew, however, at the approach of a small force from Italy led by Honorius' new general Constantius. Constantius took up the siege abandoned by Gerontius and ultimately managed to capture the Gallic emperor. The Honorian army itself was then forced to retreat when word arrived of a new Gallic usurper in the north, Jovinus, and the imminent approach of his forces. Once safely back in Italy, Constantius executed Constantine III and his youngest son, Julian, thirty miles outside of Ravenna.

Within this overall narrative context, this chapter locates the origin of much of the subsequent political turmoil that came to characterize the Honorian regime from 407-423 in both the failure of Stilicho's management of imperial affairs in the western provinces and in the resulting career of the Gallic usurper Constantine III. In terms of both the territorial extent of his regime and the length of his rule (407-411), Constantine was arguably the most successful of the numerous usurpers who rose to challenge the emperor Honorius' control over the western empire from 406-420. While Constantine's regime certainly benefited from Ravenna's preoccupation with the eastern empire until 408 and the problem of Alaric from 408-410, the usurper's overwhelming initial success in securing the loyalty of the Gallic prefecture reveals both the fundamental insecurity of the recently established Theodosian dynasty as well as a widespread dissatisfaction with the politics and leadership of Honorius' regent, the MVM Stilicho. Ultimately, however, Constantine proved no better at guiding political affairs or controlling his own imperial officers than his dynastically legitimate counterpart at Ravenna. Once Constantine's initial success had established the practice of usurpation as a viable expression of political discord, the Gallic

emperor proved incapable of preventing similar movements within his own sphere of influence. The result was the devastation of the Gallic provinces through both civil war and barbarian raids as well as the further fragmentation of the political integrity of the western empire. As such, Constantine III's tumultuous career laid the foundation for much of the subsequent political discord in the western empire under the Honorian regime.

In addition to providing a narrative of Constantine's usurpation, this chapter argues several key points. First, this chapter links the rise of political usurpation during this period to Gallic discontent with the policies of the newly established Honorian regime. This chapter also offers a new interpretation of Zosimus' controversial claims on the cause/effect relationship between the 406 Rhine invasion and the contemporary British usurpations. Contrary to much earlier scholarship which sees this passage of Zosimus as an accurate reflection of the earlier work of Olympiodorus, this chapter argues that Zosimus derived his information for this section from a far less reliable historical source. We must therefore consider the author's claims in this section of doubtful historical veracity, especially in light of evidence from other primary sources that present contrary views of these events. Finally, this chapter argues that Constantine's embassies to the emperor Honorius played a definite and visible role in the imperial court's shifting approaches to the problem of Alaric in 409.

In the early years of the fifth century, the Honorian regime under the regency of Stilicho was forced to deal with two invasions of the Italian peninsula. The first concerned the movement of Alaric into the western sphere of influence. Since his rebellion in 395, Alaric had managed to use the conflict between the eastern and western courts to his advantage. As we have seen, eastern

hostility to Stilicho' intervention in eastern affairs had effectively ended the western regent's pursuit of Alaric in 395 and 397.[109] The latter occasion resulted not only in the eastern court branding Stilicho an enemy of the state, but also the incorporation of Alaric into the eastern military establishment.[110] For unknown reasons, however, Alaric seems to have abandoned this position and moved into the western empire, launching an invasion of Italy in the autumn of 401. After close battles at Pollentia and Verona, however, Stilicho succeeded in forcing Alaric out of Italy and into Noricum in 402.[111]

The second invasion of the Italian peninsula occurred under the leadership of a Gothic king named Radagaisus. According to our limited sources for this event, Radagaisus led a motley assortment of barbarian groups from beyond the Danube into Italy in 405. After the army had spent months ravaging northern Italy, Stilicho was finally able to drive these forces into the mountains of Fiesole, where he starved them into submission. Radagaisus himself was executed in the late summer of 406 while his followers were either recruited into the Roman army or sold into slavery.[112]

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[109] The best sources for the campaigns of these years are Claudian's invectives against Stilicho's eastern rivals Rufinus and Eutropius. See Claudian, *In Rufinum* I and II, and *In Eutropium* I and II. As Claudian's work represents Stilicho's official propaganda concerning these events, see also Cameron, *Claudian*, 159-179, for the best reading of the political intricacies behind Stilicho's campaigns against Alaric in these years.

[110] For the eastern court's condemnation of Stilicho, see Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.11.1. For Alaric's rise to power over Illyricum, see Claudian, *In Eutropium* II. 211-218.

[111] The best sources for Alaric's 401-402 invasion of the Italian peninsulaare Claudian's *De bello Gothico*, recited in April, 402, and *Panegyricus de sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti*, recited in 404. Cameron has shown that these poems, which discuss the battles of Pollentia and Verona, respectively, reflect Stilicho's shifting responses to contemporary criticisms regarding his failure to deal conclusively with Alaric on these occasions. See Cameron, *Claudian*, 180-188.

[112] For Radagaisus' invasion, see Orosius, *Historiae* VII.37.4-16; Augustine, *De civitate dei* V.23; Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 405; *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 52; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 406; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.26.3-5. Zosimus, whose work still follows the earlier historian Eunapius at this point, presents a generally unreliable portrait of these events. The most glaring problem in his account is his suggestion that Stilicho fought and

The causes for both these invasions are obscure in our sources. Stilicho's court panegyricist Claudian, whose *De bello Gothico* and *De sexto consulatu Honorii Augusti* are our main sources for Alaric's 401-402 invasion, provides no indication for why Alaric chose to abandon his official position in the eastern Roman military establishment to return to the uncertainty of rebellion. In Claudian's poem, Alaric is portrayed as the typical barbarian of Roman literature, skin-clad and motivated by greed and want of destruction.[113] Modern scholarship, however, has more plausibly suggested that Alaric's motivation came from a breakdown of relations with the eastern court.[114] As a result, the general, once again in rebellion, sought to establish his power in

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defeated Radagaisus beyond the Danube. Zosimus therefore never mentions Radagaisus' Italian invasion. On the other hand, arguably the best source for Radagaisus' campaign is the *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* of the contemporary ecclesiastical historian and theologian Orosius. While preserving many relevant details of this campaign, the thesis of Orosius' history severely affects his depiction of Radagaisus. Orosius composed his work as a universal history extending from creation down to his own times, ending in the year 417. The express purpose of this history, which apparently began as a mere source collection for the composition of Augustine of Hippo's *De civitate dei*, was to combat the anti-Christian rhetoric of some Hellenes who attributed the recent troubles in the empire, particularly Alaric's sack of Rome in 410, to the imperial rejection of the traditional gods of Rome. The vast bulk of Orosius' history therefore recounts the various calamities and horrors of ancient history in order to present the troubles of the Roman Empire following the advent of Christianity in a comparatively favorable light. While Orosius' *Historiae* can be used as a contemporary witness to the political events of his own day, his thesis on the optimism of Christian times often severely strains his presentation of these events. This general tendency in Orosius' work is perhaps best seen in his presentation of Radagaisus. Orosius, like his teacher Augustine, draws a comparison between the 405 invasion of the "pagan" Radagaisus and the fateful second invasion of the Christian Alaric from 408-410, arguing that God actually intervened in secular affairs to prevent Radagaisus' sack of the imperial city, an event that would have been much more devastating due to the Gothic king's paganism. This thesis forces Orosius to both downplay the destructive activities of Alaric in 410, while painting Radagaisus in the blackest of terms. For modern studies on Orosius and his works, see David Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 135-149; Guiseppe Zecchini, "Latin Historiography: Jerome, Orosius and the Western Chronicles," in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* ed. Gabriele Marasco (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 317-345.

[113] See, for example, Claudian, *De bello Gothico* 83-89, 480-481.

[114] Modern scholars almost universally suggest that Alaric's break with the eastern court was in some way a consequence of the fall of his former patron, the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* Eutropius in the autumn of 399, and a greater or lesser "anti-Gothic" sentiment in the east following the suppressed revolt of the MVM Gainas in 399-400. See, for example, Seeck, *Untergang*, V. 314-330, Bury, Later Roman Empire, 160; Wolfram, *Goths*, 150-151; Heather, *Goths*, 206-208; Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 168-169; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 200-201. Cameron and Long, however, have argued convincingly against the presence of an official "anti-Gothic" policy in the eastern empire. Instead, they argue that Alaric and his followers were simply an obvious problem to the security of the eastern empire. See Cameron and Long, *Barbarians*, 328-336. Cameron and Long also conclusively dismiss a

the western sphere using the same violent negotiation tactics that he had previously used in the East.[115] While these tactics were not successful in the short term, Alaric ultimately succeeded in acquiring his coveted place in the western military. In 405, we find him stationed at Epirus under the command of Stilicho.[116]

In much the same way as Alaric's motivations in 401, Radagaisus' objective in invading the Italian peninsula in 405 is unknown.[117] The relative obscurity of Radagaisus in our sources as well as his origins beyond the Danube, a political sphere that was largely opaque to Roman authors, prevents any clear understanding of the circumstances that brought him to power, or the events that led to his incursion into Roman territory. The dominant hypothesis in modern scholarship sees Radagaisus and his followers as refugees, fleeing the expanding power of the Huns beyond the Danube.[118] While this is possible, there is no evidence to suggest that Hunnic activity pushed Radagaisus and his followers into Roman territory or that the Huns represented

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third view, favored by Demougeot and Stein, that Alaric was somehow acting in accord with the eastern empire in his invasion of Italy. See Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 269; Stein, *Histoire*, 248.

[115] As argued by Heather, *Goths*, 207; Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 170.

[116] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* VIII. 25.3; IX.4.2-4; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.26.1-2.

[117] The only sources which suggest motivations for Radagaisus' 405-406 Italian invasion are the ecclesiastical works of Orosius and Augustine. As previously noted, these authors are constrained by their theses to present Radagaisus as the greater evil in comparison to Alaric. Orosius and Augustine therefore suggest that Radagaisus was motivated simply by the love of cruelty and mindless slaughter. See Orosius, *Historiae* VII.37.4-16; Augustine, *De civitate dei* V.23.

[118] See, for example, Heather, *Goths*, 228; Peter Heather, "The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe," *The English Historical Review* 110:435 (Feb., 1995), 4-41; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 206-210. The best articulation of this hypothesis is the so-called "Hunnic Alternative" model suggested by Herwig Wolfram. Wolfram argues that the barbarian incursions of this period of the late fourth and fifth centuries were a result of the non-Roman peoples beyond the Danube being forced to choose between subjection to Hunnic domination or take their chances in the Roman Empire. While this process reached its height under the reign of Attila in the mid-fifth century, Wolfram suggests that the effects were already apparent as early as 376, when Valens agreed to settle a large number of primarily Gothic refugees on imperial soil. Radagaisus' invasion therefore represents this process at work in 405. See Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 123-144. Wolfram's model, however, relies on an oversimplification of a vast swath of time and political circumstances, while providing very little positive evidence.

some type of growing, collective power beyond the Danube in this period.[119] More promising is the notion that Radagaisus and his followers were seeking accommodation in the Roman Empire for their own reasons, using tactics that had forced such concessions from the imperial government in the past.[120] Our lack of sources, however, prevents any definite conclusions on Radagaisus' motivations.

In response to these threats to the Italian peninsula, Stilicho was forced to take drastic actions. Claudian tells us that Alaric's invasion in 401 came as a surprise to the imperial court. Stilicho therefore quickly traveled to Raetia to gather sufficient forces to meet this threat. In addition to recruiting heavily among the non-Roman population along the Danube, Stilicho also recalled several legions stationed in the western provinces. These included at least one legion from Britain and, most significantly, all of those guarding the Rhine *limes*. In fact, Claudian tells us that the frontier was so denuded of troops that the barbarian peoples beyond the Rhine were kept from invasion solely due to the threat of future Roman reprisals.[121]

While Claudian probably exaggerates the extent of Stilicho's removal of the Rhine legions, it is reasonable to assume that the MVM recalled the veteran, mobile legions (*comitatenses*) for the defense of Italy, leaving a bare minimum of the regular frontier troops (*limitanei*) to oversee affairs in the region.[122] Though the evidence is lacking, it is also probable that Stilicho either

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[119] As noted by Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 78-80.

[120] As argued by Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 78-80. The idea that Radagaisus and his followers were seeking entry into the Roman political sphere is implicit in Wolfram's "Hunnic Alternative" model. See Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 123-144. Goffart's suggestion simply removes the Huns as the ultimate cause for Radagaisus' actions, allowing the Gothic leader his own agency. While generally following Wolfram, Halsall also suggests that Radagaisus was using aggressive negotiation tactics in his 405 invasion. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 208.

[121] Claudian, *De bello Gothico* 414-429.

[122] The barbarian fear of Stilicho's military prowess and their willing submission to his authority is a constant feature in Claudian's works. In addition to the present passage under consideration, see, for example, *Panegyricus*

maintained these veteran legions in Italy after Alaric's retreat or that he followed a similar strategy when faced with Radagaisus invasion in 405.[123] Alan Cameron has persuasively argued that the imperial court at Ravenna was concerned with the possibility of Alaric's return until at least 404.[124] Furthermore, while the sources attest to some Roman presence on the Rhine during the barbarian incursions of 406, the general success of the invaders in entering Gaul would suggest that the Rhine defenses were operating at minimal levels.[125]

Stilicho's depletion of the Gallic defenses was arguably a necessary response to the threats of the period and ultimately proved successful against the forces of Alaric and Radagaisus.

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de quarto consulate Honorii Augusti 439-459, concerning Stilicho's visit to the Rhine frontier in 396, and *In Eutropium* 377-383, which depicts Stilicho and Honorius receiving voluntary peace embassies from various frontier groups in c.399. It is therefore possible that Claudian's statement regarding a completely denuded Rhine frontier, defended by the fear of the barbarians alone (*sola terrore*) owes more to the poet's desire to praise Stilicho's military prowess than to general's actual policies in reality. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the basic truth of Claudian's claims, which suggest that Stilicho drew heavily from the Gallic legions to meet the threat of Alaric' invasion in 401. Stilicho's withdrawal of the Rhine legions is therefore generally accepted in scholarship. See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 161; Stein, *Histoire*, 248; Pierre Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire des grandes invasions germaniques* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1964), 79-80; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 275; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 326; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 95. Halsall has shown that Stilicho's actions were perfectly in keeping with previous military expedients under the usurpers Magnus Maximus in 388 and Eugenius in 394. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 199-200.

[123] As argued by Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 169; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 275; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 199-200. Kulikowski demonstrates that *Codex Theodosianus* VII.13.16 and VII.13.17 (dating to April 17 and 19, 406, respectively) shows Stilicho's desperation in raising troops to deal with Radagaisus' invasion. Both laws allow for the recruitment of slaves into the Roman army, overturning previous legislation against this practice. See Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 330. Considering such dire circumstances, it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that Stilicho again recalled Gallic forces to deal with Radagaisus, in much the same way as he had in against Alaric in 401.

[124] Cameron shows that Honorius waited a over year after Alaric's defeat at Verona and expulsion from Italy in 402 to celebrate his imperial triumph, plausibly arguing that the delay was due to fears of Alaric's return. See Cameron, *Claudian*, 180-181.

[125] Scholars generally attribute the successful Rhine crossing of 406 to Stilicho's depletion of the Gallic legions. See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 169; Courcelle, *Histoire*, 79-80; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 95. Furthermore, our primary sources provide no evidence of Roman military intervention against these invaders until the rise of the usurper Constantine III in 407. On this point see, Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 333; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 211-212.

Nevertheless, when combined with the general eastern orientation of Stilicho's politics, such action amounted to a fundamental neglect of the imperial management of the Gallic provinces. Under the circumstances, it is perhaps inevitable that this neglect would result in problems for the Honorian regime. The usurpations of Maximus and Eugenius remained a part of living memory and the extension of the control of the Theodosian dynasty into the western empire was a relatively new development.[126] The potential for the abuse or rejection of Italian authority was therefore quite real, though it was perhaps an unavoidable risk given the circumstances prevailing in Italy during the first half of the decade.

Stilicho's policies, however, did have one unforeseeable consequence that served to jeopardize the apparently tenuous hold of the Honorian regime over this region. In late 406, groups of Alans, Vandals, and Suebi crossed the Rhine frontier and caused widespread panic in the northern Gallic provinces. Contrary to many modern perceptions, there is nothing to suggest that this crossing was somehow a consequence of problems elsewhere in the Roman Empire or beyond the Roman *limes*.[127] Occasional barbarian raids were part and parcel of frontier life in the Roman Empire, especially when the imperial government was otherwise distracted with internal

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[126] As noted by both Stevens and Drinkwater. See C. E. Stevens, "Marcus, Gratian, Constantine", *Athenaeum* 35 (1957), 316-347; Drinkwater, 'Usurpers", 272.

[127] Scholars have long attributed the 406 raids to Hunnic conquests beyond the Danube frontier. See, for example, E. A. Thompson, *The Huns* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1996; originally published as *A History of Attila and the Huns*, 1948), 32-33; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 376; Christian Courtois, *Les Vandals et l'Afrique* (Paris: Arts et métiers graphiques, 1955), 39-40; Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 81; Peter Heather, "The Huns", 4-41. More recently, some scholars have attempted to tie the 406 incursion to the defeat of Radagaisus' army at Faesulae earlier in the same year. See Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2, 28-31; Drinkwater, "Usurpers" 273; Anthony R. Birley, *The Roman Government of Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 457-460. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to associate the Rhine crossing of 406 with either the Huns or Radagaisus. This fact is argued by Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418-584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 17; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 326; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 73-118.

concerns or problems elsewhere.[128] On normal occasions, the imperial administration would eventually deal with the raiders as soon as time and resources permitted. Unfortunately for the northern Gallic provinces, the incursions of 406 coincided both with a new series of Gallic usurpations and with the divided priorities of the central administration at Ravenna in the final phase of Stilicho's regime, effectively rendering the raids of minor concern to the imperial government.

Our understanding of the 406 invaders, the events surrounding their entry into Gaul, and their subsequent history is complicated by the nature of our surviving source material. Generally, this consists of brief chronicle accounts, a single letter of Jerome, and short fragments of the work of the fifth-century historian Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as preserved in the later history of Gregory of Tours. While the sixth-century historian Zosimus does allude to these invaders as the cause of the British usurpations, this reference occurs in the notoriously unedited and unfinished Book VI of his *Historia nova* and, as we will see, there is good reason to believe that he derived this information from an unreliable earlier source. For the purposes of this study, what our meager sources do suggest is that the invaders were operating independently when they arrived at the Rhine frontier in 406 and that they displayed an early tendency to fragment into smaller units along obscure internal divisions when faced with politically advantageous circumstances. These tendencies would come to characterize the later history of these groups, especially after their entry into the Spanish provinces in 409.

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[128] Hugh Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe, AD 350-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 50-51. For an excellent discussion of the place of barbarian raids in late imperial literature and politics, see C. R. Whittaker, *Rome and its Frontiers* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 50-62.

In a short entry to his chronicle for the year 406, the contemporary Gallic theologian Prosper of Aquitane tells us that on December 31, groups of Vandals and Alans crossed the Rhine and entered Gaul.[129] The fragments of the fifth-century historian Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, preserved in Gregory of Tours' *Historia*, provide further narrative glimpses of this crossing, showing the political complexity and confusion hidden behind Prosper's simple notice.[130] Civil discord seems to have fractured the Alan contingent on the Rhine frontier. Frigeridus tells us that the Alans divided their forces between their king, Respendial, and another commander, Goar. Rather than fight against the Romans, Goar and a large number of his followers broke with their king and decided to enter Roman service. This division among the Alan troops caused

[129] Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chronicon* s.a. 406. Prosper was a Gallic theologian from the region of Aquitania, who lived during the first half of the fifth century (c. 390 – post 455). As a supporter and correspondent with Augustine of Hippo, Prosper was deeply involved in the contemporary ecclesiastical controversies concerning the teachings of Pelagius and composed several works defending Augustine's views. In the present context, Prosper is also the first extant continuator of the chronicle of Jerome from 378, publishing at least four editions of his own chronicle in the years 433, 445, 451, and 455. For the years 379-421, Prosper's chronicle is primarily concerned with ecclesiastical events in Gaul and the stability of the Theodosian dynasty in the western empire. The chronicler's stark notice of political events, however, offered without personal opinion, stands in contrast to his later presentation of events beginning with the year 422. This fact has led at least one prominent scholar, Steven Muhlberger, to suggest that Prosper may have relied on earlier annalistic accounts for the years 379-421. Nevertheless, Prosper's Gallic origins and the fact that he was a contemporary to the events of the early fifth century make him a valuable source for the first half of the fifth century. For Prosper's chronicle, see, in particular, Steven Muhlberger, *The Fifth-Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), 48-135.

[130] Gregory of Tours composed his *Historia* in the late sixth century, which covers a time frame from the creation of Adam to c. 594. While books 5-10 mostly concern events during Gregory's own lifetime, books 1-4 rely on a variety of earlier authors including the now lost histories of Sulpicius Alexander and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus for information. For Gregory's work, see, in particular, Brian Croke, "Latin Historiography and the Barbarian Kingdoms," in *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity: Fourth to Sixth Century A.D.* ed. Gabriele Marasco (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 349-389. Concerning the *Historia* of Frigeridus, very little can be said with certainty as his work survives solely in a series of fragments quoted at length in Book II of Gregory of Tours' *Historia*. He wrote in the first half of the fifth century and was apparently of Gallo-Roman extraction. His history comprised at least twelve books and may have ended with the rise of Valentinian III in 425. In the fragments of his work which Gregory preserves, Frigeridus offers deeper insight into the obscure political events in Gaul during this period. As the historian was a contemporary to the events he describes and his fragments generally augment the information provided by more well-known authors from this period, modern scholars have generally accepted Frigeridus as a reliable witness for early fifth-century history. For the work of Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, see Zecchini, "Latin Historiography: Jerome, Orosius and the Western Chronicles", 317-345.

Respendial to change his plans and withdraw from the Rhine for a time. Meanwhile, some group of Franks inflicted a great slaughter on the Vandal contingent, even killing their king, Godigisel.[131] Only the arrival of the Alans (presumably those under Respendial) saved the Vandals from being wiped out completely.[132]

Frigeridus' account is as tantalizing as it is brief. Though Goar is frequently designated a king of the Alans in secondary literature, Frigeridus does not suggest that this was the case during the Rhine crossing. His specificity concerning Respendial's rank as king may suggest that Goar was simply an influential commander in Respendial's Alan host. In 414, an unnamed Alan king, possibly Goar, aided Paulinus of Pella against other hostile non-Roman forces at Bordeaux.[133] Nevertheless, the only source that specifically cites Goar as a king of the Alans is Constantius of Lyons' *Vita Sancti Germani*, written sometime around 480 C. E.[134] This may suggest that like Alaric's assumption of the title, Goar's kingship was a development that occurred over time, a

[131] Courtois suggests that Godigisel was the king of the Hasding Vandals. In his opinion, their defeat at the hands of the Franks led to their later weakness, as evidenced in their sharing the single province of Gallaecia with the Suebi after the partition of Spain in 413. See Courtois, *Vandales*, 41-42. Unfortunately, Frigeridus does not differentiate between the Vandal groups, making it virtually impossible to discuss the political organization of the invaders of 406.

[132] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, as contained in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9.

[133] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 372-405. Wilhelm Levison was the first to identify Paulinus' unnamed Alan king in 414 as Goar. See Wilhelm Levison, "Bischof Germanus von Auxerre und die Quellen zu seiner Geschichte", *Neues Archiv* 29 (1904), 95-175. The identification is often accepted in older historiography. See, for instance, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 188; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 164. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to support this assumption. I therefore follow Martindale (*PLRE* II: Goar) in rejecting the identification. See Chapter 4 for discussion.

[134] Constantius of Lyons, *Vita Sancti Germani* 28. For text and commentary, see Constantius and René Borius, *Vie de Saint Germain d'Auxerre*. *Sources Chrétiennes* no. 112 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1965). Though his theses regarding the redating of Germanus' career to the 430s and the British rebellion as a social revolution have not found favor with later scholars, E. A. Thompson's *St. Germanus of Auxerre and the End of Roman Britain* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1984) also offers a useful commentary on the saint's *vita*.

testimony to the changing nature of the political structures among the non-Roman groups during this period.[135]

Goar's decision to join the Romans suggests there still remained at least a minimal Roman presence on the Rhine frontier at this period. After securing Goar's aid, this Roman opposition apparently became sizable enough to deter Respendial from crossing the Rhine in the spot he had initially chosen. Meanwhile, the Vandals had apparently attempted to cross at a different point, one which brought them up against a group of Franks. Scholars have almost universally accepted that these Franks were acting as allies or federates of the Romans.[136] However, Frigeridus and the Spanish historian Orosius, both of whom mention this episode with the Franks, are not specific on that point.[137] Nevertheless, it is evident that the Alans and the Vandals were acting independently at least initially, attacking frontier defenses in different areas. It seems that Respendial only came to aid the Vandals when he realized that he could not stand against the Roman forces in his area alone. Presumably the two groups then crossed the Rhine together.

Though the Suebi go unmentioned in the work of Prosper and Frigeridus, other authors suggest that they formed a third major division among the barbarians who entered Gaul in the winter of 406.[138] The Suebi are traditionally listed as one of the groups making up the Alamannic confederation. In his letter 123 to the Gallic noblewoman Ageruchia, dated to around 409,

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[135] For an excellent discussion of the development of Alaric's title of "king", see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 202-206. For the development and general use of *rex* as a title in the late antique and early medieval periods, see Andrew Gillett, "Was Ethnicity Politicized in the Earliest Medieval Kingdoms?" in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002), 85-121.

[136] See, for example, the accounts of Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 382-383; Courtois, *Vandales*, 41; Janssen, *Stilicho*, 203; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 95-96.

[137] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as contained in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9; Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.3.

[138] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.38.3 & 40.3; *Gallic Chronicle of 452* s. a. 410; Hydatius *Chronicon* 34 [42] and 41 [49]; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.3.1; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.12.3.

Jerome mentions the Alamanni as one of the tribes who crossed the Rhine.[139] Unfortunately, Jerome's letter is an artful display of his own literary education, and his ethnographic list of barbarian groups includes many unmentioned in any other contemporary source, such as the Quadi, Sarmatians, Gepids, Herules, Saxones, and even the Pannonians. The Alamanni reference may therefore owe more to his desire to pad an apocalyptic description with antagonists than to provide accurate information on the perpetrators of the Rhine crossing.[140]

Hydatius alone records another change in the political structure of the barbarian groups after their entry into Spain in 409.[141] In his entry concerning the division of Spanish provinces among

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[139] Jerome, *Epistula* 123.16.

[140] While generally maintaining this thesis, Goffart suggests that there may be some elements of fact behind Jerome's scholarly list of barbarian groups. See Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 80-81. We are on slightly better ground in Jerome's list of Gallic cities sacked by the barbarians. Nevertheless, Kulikowski has shown that we must also approach this information with caution. See Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 331-332.

[141] Hydatius was a bishop from the Spanish province of Gallaecia who composed his continuation of the chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome sometime around the year 468, the last dateable entry. While Hydatius was writing later than our two other fifth-century Gallic chroniclers, Prosper of Aquitaine and the anonymous author of the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, internal evidence in his work suggests that he was born in or shortly before the year 400. He was therefore a contemporary of these authors and, like them, an eyewitness to many of the events he describes in the first half of the fifth century. Indeed, Hydatius is unique among these other authors in his occasional reference to his own active participation in contemporary events, such as his embassy to the MVM Aëtius in 431 and the three months he spent as a captive of the Suebic leader Frumarius in 460. Overall, a deep sense of pessimism characterizes Hydatius' chronicle which can be linked to his firm belief that he was living in the Biblical "end times". Like his younger contemporary, the ecclesiastical historian Orosius, this belief leads him to present many of the political events of his days as evidence of God's providence at work in human affairs. In particular, Hydatius uses apocalyptic terms to describe the entry of the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi into the Spanish provinces in 409 and their depredations of the Roman population. Such beliefs also color his understanding of the slow breakdown of Roman political authority in the Iberian Peninsula during the course of the fifth century. Nevertheless, Hydatius' chronicle remains an excellent contemporary witness to the political events of his day and provides a valuable testimony to the history of the Spanish provinces during this period. For modern assessments of Hydatius as a historical source, see in particular Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 193-266 and the new edition of Hydatius' *Chronicon*, as contained in R. W. Burgess, *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). For present study, I have used of Burgess' superior edition of Hydatius, rather than the previous MGH edition of Theodor Mommsen. I have nevertheless followed Burgess' lead in citing the relevant passages of the chronicle using Burgess' new entry numbers, while providing the previous entry number of Mommsen's edition in brackets. See Burgess, *Hydatius*, 59-64.

the barbarians in 411, he specifies that the Vandals were composed of at least two groups. The dominant Vandal group was the Siling Vandals who received the province of Baetica for settlement. The second group was apparently of lesser number if the size of their settlement allotment is any indication. These Vandals shared the small province of Gallaecia with the Suebi.[142] In Frigeridus' description of the Rhine crossing, however, he mentions only one Vandal king, Godigisel, who died in battle with the Franks. As with the Alan civil discord under Goar, the division (and reunion after 416) of the Vandals provide a testimony to the fluidity of political and cultural identity among these groups across time and distance.

The sixth-century historian Zosimus also claims that the Rhine invasion in 406 directly led to the contemporary British usurpations. In VI.3.1 of his *Historia nova,* Zosimus tells us that the invaders' depredations in the Gallic provinces roused the fear of the soldiers stationed in Britain. The British army now turned to self-help, preferring to support the usurpation of imperial power rather than risk an invasion from across the channel.[143] In an earlier section of his history (VI.2.1-2), Zosimus details the sequence of these usurpers. The army first raised a man named Marcus to the purple. When he failed to meet their needs, they chose a man named Gratian. After four months, he too fell from favor. Finally, in early 407, they chose a man with the propitious

[142] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 41 [49]. This lesser group of the Vandals are often referred to as "Hasding" Vandals. The name goes unrecorded in fifth-century sources, only appearing among writers of the sixth century. See, for example, Jordanes, *Getica* 113. Courtois, *Vandales*, 25 n. 1suggests that the name was a term derived from the ruling dynasty, rather than from a place name as with the proposed connection between the "Siling" Vandals, formerly settled in the region of Silesia. This is possible, though it may also be possible that the "Hasding" name derives from later authors drawing on assumptions of the ethnic continuity of barbarian groups across vast swaths of time. As these Vandals are clearly differentiated from the "Silings" in the fifth-century sources, sixth-century writers assumed that they must be the "Astingi" mentioned in Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* LXXI.12.1. In general, see Courtois, *Vandales*, 21-36.

[143] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.3.1.

name Constantine, believing that he would conquer the empire just as his namesake had one hundred years before.[144]

Zosimus' information on the sequence of British usurpers in VI.2.1-2 finds confirmation in the work of the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen, as well as in a surviving fragment of both authors' collective source for this event, the lost history of Olympiodorus.[145] Unfortunately for our understanding of the British usurpations, however, Zosimus' attribution of a cause-effect relationship between the Rhine crossing of the Vandals, Alans, and Suebi, and the rise of the usurpers comes from a different section of his history (VI.3.1) and has no parallel in the surviving source tradition. Furthermore, his testimony to this connection is, in fact, chronologically at odds with what we know of these events from other authors.

In his chronicle, Prosper of Aquitaine states specifically that in the sixth consulship of Arcadius and the first of Probus, *Wandali et Halani Gallias traiecto Rheno ingressi II k. Ian.* In modern dating, this translates to December 31, 406. In the surviving fragment of Olympiodorus that Zosimus used as a source for the sequence of British usurpers in VI.2.1-2, however, Olympiodorus tells us that the British usurpations began before the seventh consulship of Honorius on January 1, 407.[146] As we know that Constantine was proclaimed and crossed from Britain to the continent in early 407, Olympiodorus' account would suggest that Gratian was

[144] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.2.1-2. Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13.1 = Müller-Dindorf 1.12.

[145] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13.1 = Müller-Dindorf 1.12; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.111-2. Our earliest source for the usurpations, however, is Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.4. In his discussion of the British usurpers, Orosius mentions Gratian and Constantine, but not Marcus.

[146] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13.1 = Müller-Dindorf fragment 12.

raised to the purple sometime in autumn, 406, and Marcus a short time earlier.[147] Therefore, the Rhine crossing of the Vandals, Alans, and Suebi could not have caused the sequence of British usurpations. According to the testimonies of Prosper and Olympiodorus, the British rebellion had to have been already well underway before the raiders broke through the Roman *limes*.

Over the years, scholars have offered a variety of more or less plausible solutions for navigating the contradiction between Prosper's date for the Rhine crossing and Zosimus' claims in VI.3.1 concerning the cause/effect relationship of the Gallic invasion and the British usurpations. In the commentary to his critical edition of Zosimus, François Paschoud argues that the commonly accepted source for this section of Zosimus' history, the now lost work of Olympiodorus, originally detailed two barbarian invasions of the Gallic provinces in 406. The first invasion caused the British usurpations, while the second was the more famous Rhine crossing of Alans, Vandals, and Suebi on December 31, 406.[148] Michael Kulikowski, on the other hand, has offered a different approach. Kulikowski, following an earlier theory put forth by Norman Baynes and drawing on recent work on the chronicle tradition, argues that Prosper's

[147] Prosper dates the rise of Constantine to 407 and this is also the date of his earliest coins. Paschoud argues for a probable date of early February, 407, based on Zosimus' narrative and Honorius' itinerary derived from the *Codex Theodosianus* VII.13.18 and VII.20.13. Paschoud, *Zosime*, III.1, 205-206; III.2, 20-21.

[148] Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2, 19-21, 28-31. Paschoud also provides an emendation to Zosimus' text, which he feels better represents the "original" text of Olympiodorus. Paschoud's hypothesis derives from his belief that Zosimus' passage presents a garbled account of the entry of a fragment of Radagaisus' army into Gaul after their defeat at Faesulae in the summer of 406. This hypothesis, however, is untenable. All of our sources tell us that Stilicho's defeat of Radagaisus' forces at Faesulae was a complete victory. More importantly, even those sources which are actively hostile to Stilicho are forced to acknowledge this victory. They therefore employ various means in an attempt to distance the hated general from the event, attributing the victory to Stilicho's subordinates or to the mercy of God. See, for example, Orosius, *Historiae* VII.37; Augustine, *De civitate dei* V.23; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 406. These writers would not have needed to use such literary ploys, if a contingent of Radagaisus' forces escaped to wreck further havoc in Gaul. Such an action would have provided these the very element they needed to further vilify Stilicho. We can therefore be relatively sure that to all intents and purposes, Radagaisus' army was annihilated at Faesulae. Stilicho's enemies had every reason to tell us if it had been otherwise.

date for the Rhine crossing should be read as referring to the last day of 405 rather than 406.[149] The theories of Paschoud and Kulikowski both have their merits and as such, have each gained supporters in the scholarly community.[150]

The key to the problem, however, seems to lie in the commonly accepted notion that Zosimus' narrative for the events after 404 more or less faithfully follows the lost work of Olympiodorus, a historian of proven reliability.[151] Unfortunately, there is good evidence to think that Zosimus was using another, less precise historian for Book VI, Chapter 3, precisely the point at which he makes his controversial claims.[152] A variety of evidence supports this view. Chapters 2 and 4 of Zosimus' sixth book of the *Historia nova* form a continuous narrative of the rise and progress of Constantine III's rebellion, beginning with an account of the British usurpers (VI.2) and continuing to detail the expansion of Constantine's power into Spain (VI.4). Both chapters also contain detailed information that can be corroborated from parallel passages in the earlier

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[149] Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 325-345. Norman H. Baynes, "Stilicho and the Barbarian Invasions", *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: Athlone Press, 1955), 326-342; adapted from an article entitled "A Note on Professor Bury's 'History of the Later Roman Empire', *Journal of Romans Studies* 12 (1922), 207-229.

[150] Drinkwater, "Usurpers" 273 and Birley, *Roman Government of Britain*, 457-460 both follow Paschoud's thesis. Kulikowski's thesis is accepted in Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 74 n. 3 and Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 211.

[151] For the life and work of Olympiodorus and his value as a source for this period, see Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, I. 27-47. See also Chapter 1.

[152] To my knowledge, Demougeot is the only scholar who has rejected the Olympiodoran attribution of this chapter of Zosimus. See Émilienne Demougeot, "Constantine III, L'Empereur D'Arles" in *L'Empire Romain et Les Barbares d'Occident (IVe-VIIe siècle), Scripta Varia* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1988; originally published in *Hommage à André Dupont (1897-1972): Études Médiévales Languedociennes*, Montpellier: 1974), 171-213. Demougeot, however, takes a perhaps overly conservative route in her analysis of Zosimus' text. In general, she only accepts that Zosimus followed Olympiodorus when she can confirm this plainly from the surviving fragments of the latter's work as presented through Photius' epitome. This approach leads her to suppose that Zosimus followed the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Sozomen at those points where their information coincides, rather than assuming a common source, Olympiodorus, for both accounts, which is much more probable. For this reason, she also attributes much of Zosimus' account of Constantine III to the work of an unknown source. In her view, this unknown author was Zosimus' source not only for VI.3, the chapter currently under discussion, but also sections such as VI.2.3-6 for which there is little reason to doubt Olympiodoran source material.

Ecclesiastical History of Sozomen, who also used the lost work of Olympiodorus as a source.[153] Zosimus VI.3, however, represents a visible narrative and chronological break in the author's main account.

In addition to the narrative break, Book VI, Chapter 3 of Zosimus contains a variety of vague and obviously incorrect statements that are unlikely to have derived from Olympiodorus. In terms of narrative, the chapter details the reasons for the usurper Constantine III's decision to garrison the Alpine passes. In order to explain this, Zosimus drops back in time from the main narrative to discuss the entry of the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi into Gaul in 406. Unfortunately, Zosimus claims that these groups entered Gaul through the Alpine passes, a contention that stands at odds with every other source we possess, which all testify to a Rhine crossing.[154] VI.3.2 contains a vague description of a battle between Roman and barbarian troops that lacks all of the detail, including location, date, and Roman leaders, that a similar passage from Olympiodorus would usually include. Finally, VI.3.3 mentions that Constantine III also restored the Rhine *limes*, which Zosimus incorrectly claims had been ignored since the reign of the emperor Julian. Zosimus then returns to the main narrative derived from Olympiodorus with Chapter 4.

All of the textual evidence would therefore suggest that Zosimus broke from his Olympiodorian source material with Chapter 3, and chose to include material from the work of a far less reliable historian, whose account possessed patently vague and incorrect information.

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[153] The information contained in Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.11 parallels Zosimus' account at VI.2.1-2 and VI.4.1.

[154] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.3.1. For the Rhine crossing, we possess contemporary and textually independent witnesses, including Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40; Prosper, *Chronicon* s. a. 406; and Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as preserved in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9. As we have seen, the barbarian groups that each author lists also tend to vary. Prosper and Frigeridus only cite the Vandals and the Alans. Orosius cites the Vandals, Alans, and Suebi, as well as the Burgundians.

While the identity of this historian must remain speculative, there is textual evidence that would suggest that Chapter 3 represents a previously unidentified fragment of the historian Eunapius. Eunapius' history, like that of Olympiodorus, only survives through fragments contained in the work of later authors. The ninth-century Byzantine scholar and patriarch Photius claims that Eunapius' history began after the reign of the Emperor Claudius II (d. 270) and ended with the death of Eudoxia, the wife of the emperor Arcadius, and the rise of the bishop Acacius to the episcopal seat at Constantinople.[155] As both of these events occurred in 404, scholars have generally accepted this year as the end date for Eunapius' work.[156] As a historian, however, Eunapius was averse to chronology, as he himself tells us in a surviving fragment, preferring to arrange his history according to the reigns of emperors and discuss events as didactic and moral lessons.[157] It is therefore entirely possible that Eunapius' history referred to events later than the year 404.[158] Furthermore, though we can date the last events in Eunapius' history (according to Photius) to this year, we should note that these are both events are associated with the eastern empire. It is therefore possible that his coverage of western events extended slightly beyond the year 404.

Zosimus' debt to Eunapius for the years 270-404 is a long-established truism of scholarship. Photius himself claims that Zosimus merely copied and condensed Eunapius' history for use in

[155] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Codex 77, I.158-60. See Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, II. 3-5. See also Chapter 1 for a general overview of Zosimus' known sources, including Eunapius.

[156] For Eunapius' life and work, see Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, I. 1-26.

[157] Eunapius, Blockley fragment 1 = Müller-Dindorf 1.

[158] Barnes has shown that the first edition of Eunapius' history, which he argues ended with the Battle of Adrianople in 378, contained references to events from the later reign of Theodosius. These references had previously led scholars to assume that this first edition extended through 404, the probable end date for the second edition. See T. D. Barnes, *The Sources of the Historia Augusta* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1978), 114-123.

his own work.[159] With the year 407, Zosimus turned to Olympiodorus' history as his main source, resulting in the loss of most narrative content for 405/406. As we have seen, however, the evident peculiarities of Zosimus VI.3 would suggest that the author deviated from Olympiodorus in this chapter, and it is possible that he went back to his Eunapian source material to provide information. In addition to the vague description of events and the overt, though factually incorrect, praise of the emperor Julian, the best evidence for this thesis is a telltale verbal parallel between the description of the mysterious battle between Romans and barbarians that appears in VI.3.2 and two previous battle descriptions in Zosimus' history, one of which definitely derives from Eunapius's account of the Battle of Adrianople.[160] While not conclusive evidence, this verbal parallel would suggest that Eunapius' history of western events extended beyond the end date of 404 for eastern events, and that Zosimus decided to incorporate some of this information into an overarching narrative concerning Constantine III that ultimately derived from Olympiodorus.

Zosimus' use of Eunapius or another, unknown source for his information in Chapter 3 does not automatically negate his assertion of a cause/effect relationship between the Rhine crossing of 406 and the rise of the usurpers in Britain. It does, however, remove the presumptive authority of an Olympiodoran source from the information. Without this support, the purported relationship between these events appears suspect, especially alongside the obviously incorrect

[159] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, Codex 98, II. 66. See Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, II. 5.

[160] The words in question (ἅπαντας πανωλεθρίᾳ διέφθειραν) are used to describe the complete destruction of an army in battle and appear in the present passage under discussion, Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.3.2 (ἢ γὰρ ἂν **ἅπαντας πανωλεθρίᾳ διέφθειραν**) as well as Zosimus' description of the battle of Adrianople derived from Eunapius (IV.24.2: Οἷς ἀπαντήσαντες ἀπροφασίστως οἱ βάρβαροι, καὶ παρὰ πολὺ τῇ μάχῃ κρατήσαντες, μικροῦ μὲν **ἅπαντας πανωλεθρίᾳ διέφθειραν**·) and Zosimus' erroneous account of Stilicho's battle with Radagaisus (V.26.5: Καὶ τοῖς βαρβάροις ἀπροσδοκήτοις ἐπιπεσὼν **ἅπαν** τὸ πολέμιον **πανωλεθρίᾳ διέφθειρεν**…). At least one scholar has argued that Zosimus' account of Radagaisus' defeat in 406 does not derive from Olympiodorus. See J. Rosenstein, "Kritische Untersuchungen über das Verhältnis zwischen Olympiodor, Zosimus und Sozomenus", *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* 1 (1862), 165-204. Rosenstein's conclusions, however, was not taken up in later generations. Given the verbal parallel, Zosimus' Radagaisus account may also derive from Eunapius.

statements also contained in Chapter 3. It therefore seems best to favor the dates of Prosper for the Rhine crossing and the authentic fragments of Olympiodorus for the British usurpations, rather than accept the spurious testimony of Zosimus in this section. The British usurpations were probably already in motion when the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi breached the Rhine frontier on December 31, 406.

While the reasons for the British usurpations remain speculative, recent scholarship, particularly articles by John Drinkwater and Michael Kulikowski, has shed much light on the progress of Constantine's revolt in Gaul. After claiming the purple, Constantine crossed to the continent at Bononia (Boulogne) in early 407 and quickly received the allegiance of most of the Gallic army as well as many prominent Gallic senators.[161] He seems to have contained the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi in the two Belgicas in the north of Gaul for three years using both military and diplomatic means, possibly combined with some military recruitment.[162] He also refortified the Rhine frontier, and gained easy recognition as emperor in southeastern Gaul as well as Spain.[163] His first coins were minted at Lyons, suggesting that this city may have been the goal

[161] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 12; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.11.2; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.27.2.

[162] For Constantine's success in containing the 406 barbarians, see Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 331-338. In the previously discussed problematic passage of the *Historia nova* (VI.3.2), Zosimus mentions a battle between Romans and barbarians in which the Romans emerged victorious, but allowed the barbarians to escape and regroup, becoming dangerous once again. As this vague battle scene comes during a discussion of Constantine and the Vandals, Alans, and Suebi, Zosimus apparently intends his readers to see these groups as the belligerents. Orosius also mentions that Constantine made ill-advised treaties with barbarians, though it is true that he does not specify the 406 invaders. In the same chapter, he mentions a newly recruited force of barbarians given the name *Honoriaci*. See Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.4 and VII.40.7.

[163] See Drinkwater, "Usurpers" 269-298; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 333; Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 157.

of the first phase of his invasion.[164] Following his usurpation, Constantine's correspondence with the imperial court contained the traditional claim of innocence and request for recognition. Unlike previous usurpers, however, Constantine did not rule out the prospect of conciliation and alliance upon an initial rebuff.[165] Instead, it became a permanent (though at times, poorly managed) feature of his public policy. These first coins from Lyons as well as later issues from Trier and Arles each bear inscriptions that place Constantine within the legitimate imperial college, clearly displaying his political aspirations towards compromise.[166]

This policy may also have slowed the progress of his invasion. Constantine paused in the winter of 407/408 before taking Arles. If the city was not yet the capital of the Gallic Prefecture, it may have served as a temporary capital for the remnants of the Honorian regime. As the sources suggest that Constantine was recognized in northern and southeastern Gaul soon after his arrival, this pause may have served as a further peace overture to the imperial court.[167] Regardless, this decision almost ended his revolt in the first year. Through military tenacity and

[164] Drinkwater makes a compelling case for Lyons serving as a mid-point in the transfer of the Gallic Praetorian Prefecture capital from Trier to Arles, established in the early years of the fifth century. See Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 275-279.

[165] In the sources, the first mention of Constantine's correspondence and protests of innocence occurs in early 409, when Honorius is forced to temporarily acknowledge the usurper. Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 1.12; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.43.1. If this were correct, it would mean that Constantine controlled Gaul for almost two years before he made any overtures to the imperial court. On the basis of the reconstructed progress of Constantine's climb to power, the propaganda of his coinage, as well as the evidence of earlier usurpation attempts, it is far more reasonable to conclude that Constantine's first appeals to the imperial court came shortly after his assumption of the purple, probably while he was still stationed in Bononia.

[166] As argued by Demougeot, "Constantine III", 101-104; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 276-279; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 333. Coins from Lyons, Arles, and Trier bearing the legend *Victoria Augggg* (Constantine, Honorius, Arcadius, Theodosius), and after the death of Arcadius in 408, *Victoria Auggg* (Constantine, Honorius, Theodosius) show that Constantine was promoting himself as a member of the imperial college. *RIC* 10.123-149.

[167] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 12. 1; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.11.3; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.2.2. All of our sources tell us that Constantine quickly received recognition from the Gallic troops. For Constantine's progress through Gaul and his possible overtures to Ravenna, see Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 276-279.

intrigue, Stilicho's general Sarus managed to attack and besiege the usurper in the city of Valence for seven days. Only the arrival of a substantial relief force under the generals Edobich and Gerontius forced Sarus to withdraw from the siege and retreat into Italy.[168] In the spring of 408, Constantine corrected his earlier mistake and took Arles, forcing the Honorian loyalists to flee to Ravenna.[169]

In Spain, Didymus and Verinianus, relatives of the Theodosian house, organized a make-shift army of slaves and dependents and launched a revolt in the province of Lusitania. Constantine raised his eldest son, Constans, to the rank of Caesar and sent him to deal with the threat along with the MVM Gerontius, the newly appointed *praefectus praetorio per Gallias* (PPO), Apollinaris.[170] After an initial defeat, the forces of the usurper crushed the rebellion.[171] In the late summer or autumn of 408, Constans delivered Didymus and Verinianus, along with their wives, to his father at Arles. Rather than keeping the men as valuable bargaining chips, Constantine unwisely chose to put them to death, an action that strained his later negotiations with Honorius for imperial recognition.[172]

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[168] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.1.3-4.

[169] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.4.4-8; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.31.4. In these narratives which ultimately derive from Olympiodorus, Stilicho uses the fact of Constantine's presence in Arles to argue against Honorius' journey to the eastern capital.

[170] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.4.1-4. Gerontius is almost certainly the name Zosimus intended in his single mention of a general named "Terentius" who accompanied Constans and Apollinaris to Spain. See *PLRE* II: Terentius.

[171] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.5-8.

[172] As argued by Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 281-282. For the execution of Didymus and Verinianus, see Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.5-7; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.4.3 – VI.5.2; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.11.4 – IX.12.1.

At the beginning of the year 409, Constantine therefore controlled all of Gaul and Spain and had no viable enemies of which to speak. The death of Stilicho in the summer of 408 had left an imperial administration in Italy crippled by court intrigue, and thoroughly unable to deal with events in Gaul. Furthermore, Ravenna's consistent indecisiveness over the correct approach to the problem of Alaric had left the Gothic general and his army free to apply pressure directly to the city of Rome. Under these conditions, Constantine now began to exert his influence in Italian affairs.

As we have seen, the *magister officiorum* Olympius had assumed control of the Honorian administration following the collapse of Stilicho's regime. In addition to launching an on-going and vicious persecution of Stilicho's former partisans, the new regime of Olympius rejected Stilicho's conciliatory approach to the problem of Alaric and adopted a hostile stance. This political line caused the imperial court to reject Alaric's initial attempts at peaceful negotiation, which directly led to Alaric's invasion of the Italian peninsula and the first siege of Rome.[173]

This overwhelming disaster seems to have temporarily weakened Olympius' control over the emperor. Late in 408, the Roman Senate succeeded in reaching a temporary accord with Alaric, which laid the foundations for a permanent peace treaty. After collecting the necessary funds to meet Alaric's demands, which included 5,000 pounds of gold and 30,000 pounds of silver, the Senate sent an embassy to Honorius both seeking his sanction for the peace and to inform him that Alaric still required noble hostages to establish a lasting treaty. Zosimus tells us that Honorius wholly agreed to all of these stipulations. The senate therefore turned over the money

[173] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 5.1 = Müller-Dindorf 1.2; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.32.1-7. For discussion of these events, see Chapter 1.

to Alaric and the general withdrew the bulk of his forces to Etruria as a good faith measure in anticipation of the treaty.[174]

This political situation changed abruptly in early 409. At his time, Constantine sent an embassy of eunuchs to Ravenna which sought Honorius' recognition for the usurper as a member of the imperial college. Honorius knew that Constantine had captured his Spanish relatives Didymus and Verinianus, but did not yet know that Constantine had already executed these men. In Zosimus' account, fear for the safety of his relatives as well as the present threat of Alaric, led Honorius to recognize the usurper. He agreed to share power over the western empire and sent an imperial robe to Constantine as a token of acceptance.[175]

This agreement between Honorius and Constantine in early 409, regardless of the fact that it was made under duress, seems to have prompted the imperial court to return to Olympius' previously hostile stance towards Alaric. Initially, Honorius simply delayed fulfilling the terms of treaty. The emperor's hesitation resulted in a new embassy from the Roman Senate in order to

[174] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.41.4-42.2.

[175] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.43.1-2. Zosimus situates this embassy as occurring just after the Honorius' assumption of the consulship for the eighth time and Theodosius II's third assumption of this office, therefore the year 409. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.42.3. For the reliability of Zosimus' dating for this event, see Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 1, 287-288. For Honorius' recognition of Constantine, see also Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 12. Drinkwater suggests that Honorius may also have granted Constantine an honorary consulship at this time. A Greek funerary inscription from Trier, dating the year as the eighth consulship of Honorius and the first of Constantine, suggests either that the usurper simply claimed the consulship in his own domains or that Ravenna awarded him the position. If the latter, then it must have been purely honorary, as all other sources record the year as the eighth consulship of Honorius and the third of Theodosius II, the eastern emperor. For the inscription, see *Inscriptiones Graecae* XIV Supplement 2559. Drinkwater suggests that Constantine may have shown deference in assuming the regular consulship to Theodosius II, who was in his first year of rule over the eastern empire, and accepted a purely honorary consulship. See Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 281. While Drinkwater's suggestion of an honorary consulship for Constantine is a valid possibility, his presentation of the circumstances contradicts the internal dating of Zosimus' text which places the Constantine's embassy early in the year 409, after Honorius and Theodosius II had already taken up their consulships. There is therefore little reason to assume that Constantine deferred the office to Theodosius II.

encourage Honorius to recognize the accord and reopen negotiations with Alaric. This embassy, however, faced a negative reception at Ravenna. According to Zosimus, Olympius actively disputed the senators' arguments and dismissed their pleas for peace. The emperor then sent soldiers from Dalmatia to guard the city of Rome, an act that violated the truce and directly led to new outbreaks of violence with Alaric.[176] With these conflicts, the senatorial initiative to establish a working peace with Alaric effectively collapsed.[177]

In Zosimus' account, the shift in Honorius' approach to the problem of Alaric, from his support for the Roman Senate's peaceful overtures in 408 to the renewed outbreak of violence in 409, seems to hinge on the embassy of Constantine. Zosimus suggests that Honorius's decision to recognize Constantine III as a member of the imperial college was based solely on the emperor's concern for the safety of Didymus and Verinianus as well as his preoccupation with the present threat of Alaric. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that Constantine's embassy in early 409 also offered the more positive incentive of the usurper's assistance against Alaric, and that this promise encouraged Olympius and Honorius to return to their previously hostile stance against the renegade general in Italy.[178] Indeed, Zosimus explicitly mentions Constantine's offer of assistance against Alaric in his account of the negotiations surrounding the

[176] For Honorius' positioning of the Dalmatian troops as a breach of the truce with Alaric, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 292. Zosimus tells us that Alaric virtually annihilated the Dalmatian troops. This act, in turn, led to Olympius' assault on Athaulf's forces, which had entered Italy to join Alaric. For these events, see Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.45.1-6.

[177] Sozomen, who was also following Olympiodorus's account for these events, compresses the senatorial peace initiative in 408 with Iovius' efforts for peaceful reconciliation with Alaric later in 409 in his account. See Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.6-7. Perhaps for this reason, Sozomen does not record the embassy of Constantine or Honorius' recognition of the usurper. Zosimus' account of the first embassy of Constantine finds confirmation in the Photius' epitome of Olympiodorus. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 13. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 12.

[178] Burns makes a similar case for the effects of Constantine's embassy in Italian politics. See Thomas S. Burns, *Barbarians within the Gates of Rome: A Study of Roman Military Policy and the Barbarians, ca. 375-425 A.D.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 235-241.

second embassy of Constantine to Ravenna in the spring or early summer of 409.[179] While there is no indication that Olympius was a partisan of Constantine, the *magister officiorum* was apparently willing to accept the dangerous offer of help from the usurper to pursue his own political agenda. We must therefore see Constantine's influence in Italian affairs as pivotal to understanding the fluctuating policies of the imperial court at this time.

Nevertheless, the issue of the execution of Didymus and Verinianus still required resolution before any real alliance between Constantine and Honorius could exist. According to Zosimus, Constantine therefore sent a second embassy to Honorius, under the leadership of a Gallic aristocrat named Jovius in 409. Jovius sought confirmation of the peace that Honorius had previously established with the usurper. He also expressed regret for the deaths of Didymus and Verinianus, claiming that their executions had taken place without the knowledge of Constantine. The news of the death of his relatives troubled Honorius. Jovius, however, urged the emperor to accept the agreement with Constantine, due to his current problems with Alaric. Furthermore, Jovius stated that if he were allowed to return, he would inform Constantine of the troubles in Italy and the usurper would bring the combined armies of Britain, Gaul, and Spain to his aid. With these promises, Honorius again confirmed Constantine's standing as co-emperor and allowed Jovius and the Gallic embassy to depart.[180]

Unlike Constantine's previous embassy, it is difficult to determine what, if any, effect the second embassy had on contemporary Italian politics. In the interim months between embassies, Olympius had fallen to court intrigue and the praetorian prefect of Italy, Jovius (not to be confused with the homonymous leader of Constantine's second embassy), had taken control of

[179] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.1.1-2.

[180] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.1.1-2.

the imperial court at Ravenna. As we have seen, the PPO Jovius had followed the Roman Senate's lead in seeking peace with Alaric. His diplomatic misstep at a critical juncture in the resulting negotiations, however, led to Alaric's second siege of Rome in the spring of 409.[181]

Zosimus places Constantine's second embassy as occurring after this breakdown of Jovius' negotiations with Alaric. If the placement of this episode is correct, then it is reasonable to assume that Honorius might have continued to hold out hope for the intervention of Constantine's Gallic army.[182] Nevertheless, Zosimus' depiction of the second embassy suggests that the negotiations were tense. Honorius' anger over the execution of his relatives apparently caused Constantine's ambassador to fear that the emperor would not allow him to return to Gaul. While an imperial alliance was eventually confirmed, Constantine's decision to execute Didymus and Verinianus seems to have ensured that any pact between the emperors would remain unsteady.[183] Perhaps for this reason, when Constantine did finally march his army to intervene directly in Italian affairs in the summer of 410, he found his help unwanted.

Shortly after Constantine's second embassy to Italy, however, his fortunes began to unravel. After breaking the Spanish rebellion of Didymus and Verinianus, the Caesar Constans had left his court in Caesaraugusta (Zaragoza) under the control of Gerontius and escorted his prisoners to Arles.[184] Once these had been handed over, he seems to have remained with his father at Arles

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[181] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.48.4-49.2; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.7.

[182] Demougeot suggests Zosimus' account of Honorius' summoning ten thousand Huns to his assistance in *Historia nova* V.50.1-3 was in preparation for a combined assault by Honorius and Constantine. See Demougeot, "Constantine III", 201-202. This is possible, but the chronological sequence of these events is unclear in Zosimus' text. In particular, Zosimus places Honorius' Hunnic recruitment before the second embassy of Constantine at VI.1.1-2.

[183] As argued by Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 281-282.

[184] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as contained in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9.

until spring or summer 409.[185] Unfortunately, in an obscure sequence of events, the MVM Gerontius, still stationed in Spain, chose this time to revolt. The circumstances surrounding this rebellion are open to debate, though Zosimus clearly ties Gerontius' actions to the return of Constans to Spain in the company of a new MVM, Justus.[186] Gerontius raised a member of his household, an otherwise unknown Maximus, to Augustus, and in an action that was to have longstanding consequences for the western empire at large, stirred the 406 invaders, hitherto settled in northern Gaul, into open revolt once again.[187] Over the course of the next few months, these groups of Alans, Vandals, and Suebi, moved south into the provinces of Aquitania and Narbonensis, pillaging towns and estates along the way.[188] In autumn of 409, they crossed the Pyrenees and entered Spain, where they would eventually divide the provinces amongst themselves.[189]

Even beyond the loss of Spain, Gerontius' revolt and the new barbarian devastations seem to have fatally weakened the integrity of Constantine's Gallic empire. Zosimus connects

[185] As argued by Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2, 37; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 337.

[186] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.5.2. Demougeot notes the relationship between the arrival of Iustus and the revolt of Gerontius. She also suggests that Gerontius' revolt may have occurred due to Gerontius' anger over Constantine's failure to provide troops for the defense of Spain. She is almost certainly incorrect, however, in dating Gerontius' revolt to after the return of Constantine's troops from the aborted Italian campaign in the summer of 410. See Demougeot, "Constantine III", 203-204. While rejecting her dating of the revolt, Drinkwater largely follows Demougeot's hypothesis for the cause of Gerontius' break with Constantine III. See Drinkwater, "Usurpers" 283-284. Demougeot's hypothesis is certainly possible, the primary sources provide no evidence for this conclusion.

[187] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.5.2.

[188] As previously mentioned, Kulikowski has argued persuasively that Constantine succeeded in confining these groups in northern Gaul until this time. As a consequence, we must see the lamentations of the southern Gallic poets, most famously Orientius' *Commonitorium*, as referencing the destruction that occurred during 409. See Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 337-339.

[189] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 34 [42], tells us that the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi entered Spain on a Tuesday, either the 28th of September or October 12th, 409. For the division of the Spanish provinces among these groups, see Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.10; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 41 [49]. For a discussion of the consequences of this invasion on the administration of the Spanish provinces, see Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 161-167.

Constantine's failure to deal with the renewed threat of the 406 invaders, as well as new incursions from beyond the Rhine, with the collapse of Roman rule in Britain, Armorica, and other provinces, as each turned to local self-help measures. Zosimus claims that these areas expelled their Roman magistrates and refused to submit any longer to Roman laws.[190] While many earlier scholars, particularly E. A. Thompson, interpreted Zosimus to mean that these areas either descended into lawlessness or experienced massive political reorganizations, recent scholarship has shown that inhabitants of these regions continued to view themselves as "Roman" and that their subsequent political administration still operated on Roman administrative models.[191] The revolts that Zosimus describes therefore seem to have consisted of a rejection of the imperial locus of power and authority, as situated in Ravenna or in Constantine's court at Arles, as opposed to the overall form of Roman governance. Anthony Birley notes evidence for the continuity of Roman office-holders in Britain as recorded in the late fifth-century *vita* of Germanus of Auxerre.[192] Raymond Van Dam also argues convincingly that the inhabitants of Britain and Armorica simply turned to localized rule, while maintaining Roman political and administrative structures.[193] For these reasons, contrary to Zosimus' depiction of lawlessness, it is best to understand Britain and Armorica's rejection of Roman

[190] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.5.2-3.

[191] Thompson implausibly argues for a complete breakdown of Roman power structures in Britain and Armoricaas a corollary to his argument that the revolt was caused by widespread peasant revolt. See Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre*, 11-12, 32-37. For similar conclusions, see Stein, *Later Roman Empire*, 187, 191. Matthews suggests that Armorica descended into political chaos and banditry. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 320.

[192] See Birley, *Roman Government of Britain*, 463-465.

[193] Van Dam shows that in the *Historia nova*, Zosimus uses subjection to imperial authority (i.e. Roman laws) as a euphemism for Roman identity. Zosimus' statement that the inhabitants of these regions rejected Roman laws is therefore a reflection of the author's cultural bias, suggesting that these regions had reverted to "barbarism" when they rejected the imperial authority in favor of self-rule. As such, Zosimus' statement cannot be read to suggest some drastic change in the political administration of these regions at the provincial level. See Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 25-56.

control at this time as simply a rejection of Constantine's regime and the expelled magistrates as representatives of the usurper's administration.[194] As such, these events show not only the continued fracturing of political authority under Constantine's regime, but also an early representation of the tendency of some Roman communities to favor regional, non-imperial centers of power over the political authority of a geographically distant emperor in later decades.[195]

After the revolt of Gerontius in the spring or summer of 409, the sources become even more muddled than usual about the sequence of events. The scholarly narrative therefore varies according to which primary source an individual scholar tends to favor. This narrative divide is most evident in the period assigned to Gerontius' raising a member of his household, the *domesticus* Maximus, to the purple. Paschoud, followed by Drinkwater, would delay this event to the summer of 410, leaving Gerontius in an ambiguous position for perhaps a full year.[196] Matthews and Kulikowski associate this event with the beginning of Gerontius' revolt in 409.[197] Likewise, the raising of Constans to Augustus, which is likely to have been either the cause or the effect of the rise of Maximus, is variously dated to 409 or 410. Unfortunately, the sources provide ample evidence for either interpretation, leaving any narrative of these events in the realm of speculation.

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[194] As argued by Peter Salway, *Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 437-442; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 285-286; Birley, *Roman Government of Britain*, 460.

[195] This process is particularly evident after the end of the Theodosian dynasty in the west with the death of Valentinian III in 455. For a good overview of this gradual political shift towards local power centers, see Michael Kulikowski, "The Western Kingdoms," in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*. ed. S. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 31-59.

[196] Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2, 37; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 283-285.

[197] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 311; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 337.

Zosimus tells us that the return of Constans and his new general Justus to Spain initiated Gerontius' rebellion.[198] In keeping with the views of Matthews and Kulikowski, it is far more likely that Gerontius raised Maximus immediately following his revolt, rather than at some later date. Revolting from an entrenched regime, even if it was arguably illegitimate like that of Constantine, would require Gerontius to offer a new imperial focus for his troops. Such had been the case only recently with Constantine's own rise in Britain, an event in which Gerontius, himself a Briton, had probably played a part. After driving Constans and the Constantinian loyalists from the peninsula, he proceeded to make peace with the non-Roman groups who had crossed the Pyrenees in autumn of 409.[199]

Late 409 or early 410 found Constans and his administration back with his father at Arles. As we have seen, during the spring or early summer of 409, Jovius' embassy had secured Constantine's place alongside Honorius and Theodosius II in the imperial college in return for aid against Alaric. Constantine himself was therefore in the process of gathering his army for his ill-fated Italian campaign. The Gallic emperor also reorganized his administration as part of these preparations. He raised his son Constans from Caesar to full Augustus.[200] According to Zosimus,

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[198] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.5.2.

[199] Frigeridus claims that Maximus' regime was supported by troops of various barbarian peoples. Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 9 "…*atque in se cometatu gentium barbararum accinctum* …". Photius' summary of Olympiodorus claims that Gerontius made some type of peace with the barbarians. Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 17. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 16 …τὴν πρὸς τοὺς βαρβάρους ἀσμενίσας εἰρήνην… Finally, Orosius claims that Maximus is currently in residence among the barbarians after his failed usurpation. As noted above, Orosius must always be used with caution, but this notice may be evidence of strong ties between his failed regime and the barbarians who entered Spain in 409. See Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.5.

[200] Both Sozomen and Zosimus seem to associate the rise of Constans to Augustus with Constantine's Italian campaigns. Sozomen does this directly, while Zosimus, whose text ends before the campaign begins, places the rise of Constans just after the fall of Attalus, thus summer 410. While this should probably not be seen as an exact date, it at least suggests the approximate time of somewhere between early spring and summer 410. Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.12; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.13.1.

Constantine also demoted Apollinaris, the grandfather of the famous poet and epistolographer Sidonius, as praetorian prefect and selected another man to replace him.[201] From the evidence of Frigeridus, and later of Sidonius himself, this was Decimius Rusticus, the former *magister officiorum*.[202]

While his father set out for Italy in the summer of 410, Constans may have departed for a third assault against Gerontius in Spain. The possibility of this event, however, is open to debate.[203] Sozomen can be read to suggest it, claiming that Constantine, after his abortive Italian campaign in the summer of 410, met his son at Arles, who was fleeing from Spain. Photius, in his summary of Olympiodorus, suggests that Gerontius pursued Constans as he fled Spain. Both accounts are, however, compressions of the years 409-411 taken from the same original source, and both are therefore misleading on several counts. Nevertheless, the sources do at least suggest that Constans set out against Gerontius yet again in the spring of 410.

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[201] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.13.1.

[202] Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9. This fragment is problematic in many ways. It associates Decimius Rusticus as PPO with the arrival of the first news of Gerontius' revolt in Spain. In keeping with sequence of events that Zosimus suggests, I would see the rise of Constans to Augustus and the promotion of Rusticus to PPO as events associated with Constantine's preparations for his Italian campaign. Therefore I agree with Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2, 65-66, that this event took place in early spring of 410. Athough Zosimus' Book VI is notoriously unedited, he is careful to place this brief mention of the reorganization of the Gallic administration firmly between the fall of Attalus and Alaric's new peace overtures towards Ravenna, combining them in a single section, VI.13.1. Further information that Frigeridus provides, particularly that Edobich was sent to the German peoples, while Constans and Rusticius set out for the Gauls, suggests that Frigeridus has here combined Gerontius' revolt in 409 with Constantine's preparations for Gerontius' Gallic invasion which occurred in late 410 or early 411.

[203] Paschoud, *Zosime*, III. 2, 37, believes that Constans was raised to Augustus at the beginning of summer, 410, and sent against Gerontius, only to flee back to Gaul upon the rise of Maximus to the purple at the end of the same summer. Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 283-284, suggests that second attack against Gerontius was planned for the summer of 410, but was abandoned for unexplained reasons upon the arrival of news of Maximus assuming the purple. Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 339, sees not two, but a single, year-long battle between Constans and Gerontius, extending from Gerontius' revolt in the spring/early summer 409 to Constans arrival in Arles in the summer of 410. For the current narrative, I follow Halsall, who I feel better incorporates the evidence from Sozomen. Halsall depicts a two-pronged offensive in the summer of 410. This offensive saw Constantine march into Italy, while Constans marched once again into Spain against Gerontius. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 221-222. The state of the sources, however, does not permit a definitive solution to this problem.

In the meantime, Constantine proceeded to uphold his part of the arrangement with Honorius. Constantine marched from Arles into northern Italy at some time during the summer of 410. Unfortunately for the usurper, his faction at the court of Honorius suffered a blow from which it could not recover. Honorius' *magister equitum* Allobich, the apparent leader of a Constantinian faction, had previously murdered Eusebius, the recently appointed *praepositus sacri cubiculi*.[204] While the specific reasons for this crime are now unknown to us, the murder itself reflects the chaotic state of the factional conflict in the imperial court during this period. Allobich apparently considered that the time was ripe for yet another overthrow of the ruling faction, to correspond with the arrival of his master. Unfortunately, he overestimated his strength. Under obscure circumstances, Allobich was apprehended and put to death with Honorius' consent and in the imperial presence.[205] With the death of Allobich, Constantine apparently reconsidered his Italian campaign. He halted his progress in Liguria and retraced his steps to his residence at Arles.[206]

Now back in Gaul in late summer or early autumn 410, Constantine met his son, Constans, who was returning from his Spanish defeat at the hands of Gerontius.[207] Whatever peace they enjoyed, however, was short lived, as Constantine's empire continued to crumble around them. After beating back two failed invasions, Gerontius now went on the offensive, launching a campaign into Gaul against his former patrons. Constantine sent his loyal MVM Edobich beyond

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[204] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 15. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 14.

[205] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 15. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 14. Sozomen claims that Allobich was assassinated before the eyes of the emperor while returning from an imperial procession, causing Honorius to dismount and give thanks to God for the murder. See Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.12.5. This latter account is in keeping with the author's theme of the piety of the Theodosian emperors, and probably represents Sozomen's elaboration of his Olympiodorian source material. For this feature of Sozomen's work, see Leppin, "Church Historians I," 238-241.

[206] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.12.4.

[207] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.12.4-6.

the Rhine to raise reinforcements, and assigned the organization of the Gallic defenses to Constans.[208] Constans, however, fared no better against Gerontius than he had on previous occasions. In the civil war that followed, Constans was forced to retreat to his headquarters at Vienne. In this city, he was besieged and killed in late 410 or early 411.[209] Gerontius then turned his army against Constantine, beginning a siege of Arles that would ultimately cost both men their lives.

In the meantime, events in Italy had improved. Since Constantine's ignominious retreat, Honorius' meager realm had suffered the shock of Alaric's sack of Rome in late August. By the autumn of 410, however, a new, aggressive faction had emerged at Ravenna that did not favor peace with either the usurpers in Gaul or Alaric's marauding army. At the apparent head of this new faction was an Illyrian officer named Constantius. Constantius was originally from the city of Naissus (Niš) in Dacia, a birthplace he shared with the early fourth-century emperor Constantine. According to Olympiodorus, he had joined the army in the reign of Theodosius.[210] This would suggest that he was among the officers who had accompanied the eastern army of Theodosius to the west in the civil war against Eugenius in 395 and had remained there under Stilicho to form the core of Honorius' regime.

Attempts to deal with Alaric and his motley army had largely dominated the activities of the various court factions since the death of Stilicho. The faction of Constantius, however, saw this

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[208] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.13; Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, as contained in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9.

[209] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.4; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 17.1 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 16; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.13; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a 411. For commentary, see Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 339-340.

[210] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 37 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 39.

pressure relieved. Following the sack of Rome and the subsequent retreat of Alaric's forces in August 410, however, imperial politics returned to their normal footing. That is, dealing first and foremost with challenges to the legitimate imperial dynasty once again became the order of the day. This meant that for the first time in two years, Constantine and his Gallic regime became Ravenna's priority. In the autumn of 410, the imperial government gathered a small army in Italy. In the following spring, it crossed the Alps and launched an attack on Arles under the command of Constantius as *magister peditum* and another previously unknown officer, Ulfilas, as *magister equitum.*[211] In doing so, Constantius was almost certainly aware that they were entering a politically contentious region.

When the Italian army entered Gaul, Gerontius and his Spanish army had already succeeded in destroying Constantine's defenses in the autumn of 410 and were then in the process of besieging the usurper in his capital city of Arles. News of the unexpected arrival of Constantius and Ulfilas seems to have a caused a major defection of Gerontius' forces to the army of the legitimate regime. Thus weakened, Gerontius had no choice but to withdraw from the siege and retreat back to his stronghold in Spain. Gerontius' remaining troops, however, did not approve of this decision and turned on him. In a scene that Sozomen paints in heroic colors, Gerontius was besieged in his house with his wife and a few loyal retainers. After killing three hundred of his former troops, Gerontius, his wife, and a loyal Alan follower chose suicide over falling into the hands of their enemies.[212]

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[211] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.1; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 17. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 16; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.13 & IX.14.1-2. Ulfila's obviously Gothic name, however, probably indicates that he, like Constantius, was part of the force that Theodosius led west against Eugenius in 395, subsequently finding a place in the reorganized military of Stilicho.

[212] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.13. Sozomen's source for his accounts of the death of Gerontius and the fall of Constantine III is almost certainly the now lost work of Olympiodorus. See Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising*

Back at Arles, the army of Constantius and Ulfilas took up the siege of Constantine and his forces, but soon experienced a surprise of their own. When Gerontius had first invaded Gaul, Constantine had sent his loyal general Edobich to recruit relief forces among the barbarians beyond the Rhine. Constantius and Ulfilas now learned that this relief army was approaching from the north. Upon receiving this news, the Honorian generals were alarmed and like Gerontius before them, initially decided to retreat rather than face the expected forces. The imminent arrival of Edobich, however, seems to have forced their hand towards combat. Constantius and Ulfilas therefore crossed the Rhone that bordered ancient Arles on the north, and took up positions.[213]

Sozomen provides an uncharacteristically detailed account of the ensuing battle, which almost certainly draws on the lost work of Olympiodorus. Constantius with the infantry awaited Edobich's relief army, while Ulfilas with the cavalry hid in ambush. Once Edobich's forces began to engage those of Constantius, Ulfilas fell on the northern army from behind, leading to a thorough rout. The vast majority of Edobich's army surrendered, while the general himself fled the battlefield and sought refuge with Ecdicius, a man whom he considered to be a loyal friend. Rather than provide refuge, however, Ecdicius killed Edobich and delivered his head to Constantius, seeking reward and honors as recompense. Constantius, however, was disgusted with this violation of the guest/host relationship as well as the general betrayal of a friend.

Historians, II. 179-181. For Olympiodorus' ties to the western empire and his reliability as a contemporary source for political events in the western empire, see Chapter 1.

[213] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.14.

Apparently believing that the presence of Ecdicius was a curse upon both himself and the army, Constantius dismissed the man with nothing but the thanks of the state.[214]

Having defeated Edobich's army, Constantius and Ulfilas returned to the siege of Arles. Soon, however, they were made aware of a further threat from the north, the rise of a new usurper, the Gallic aristocrat Jovinus.[215] Jovinus is an obscure figure in the surviving sources, usually little more than a name. The fragments of the lost histories of Olympiodorus and Frigeridus alone provide any real details concerning the nature and events of his regime. Nevertheless, the duration of his rule from 411 to 413 and the strong support he enjoyed among discontented groups within the fractured empire, including both Gallic aristocrats and leaders of non-Roman ethnicity such as Athaulf and Sarus, suggest that his significance far outweighs the scant treatment that he receives in the surviving sources.[216]

Possibly even before Constantius and Ulfilas entered Gaul in the spring of 411, Jovinus gathered some remnants of the collapsed regime of Constantine and launched a new usurpation in northern Gaul. Olympiodorus claims that he was raised to the purple at Mundiacum in

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[214] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.14. Demougeot offers a variety of possible reasons for Constantius' treatment of Ecdicius. She suggests that Constantius may have wished to take Edobich alive in order to use him either to obtain the capitulation of Constantine III or to recruit members of his barbarian army. See Demougeot, "Constantine III", 206. Both suggestions are possible, but probably unnecessary to explain Constantius' reaction to such evident betrayal. In addition to the valid reasons cited in Sozomen's account, Ecdicius, the trusted friend of Constantine's general, was almost certainly a former adherent of the usurper's regime, who now sought to join the winning side with his murder of Edobich. Constantius had little reason to favor such a man or his actions. For similar conclusions, see Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 32.

[215] Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9.

[216] As argued by R. Scharf, "Jovinus-Kaiser in Gallien" *Francia* 20 (1992) 1-13; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 287-292. Jovinus' coinage, minted at Trier, Lyons, and Arles, gives some indication of the extent of his territorial control. See *RIC* 10. 152-154.

Germania Secunda.[217] He also gained with the support of Goar and Guntiarius, leaders of groups of Alans and Burgundians, respectively. While Guntiarius is otherwise unknown, Goar was the leader of that group of Alans that had chosen to ally themselves with the Romans during the fateful Rhine crossing in the winter of 406.[218] It is therefore probably safe to assume that both men were seeking recognition and favorable treatment for their followers within the Roman Empire.[219]

By late spring 411, Jovinus was apparently strong enough to threaten the Italian army besieging Constantine at Arles. Frigeridus tells us that news arrived from northern Gaul that Jovinus had been proclaimed and that an army of Burgundians, Franks, Alamanni, and Alans were marching against the besiegers.[220] This information seems to have caused concern for both the Italian army and Constantine himself. Realizing that all was lost, Constantine now renounced

[217] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17. The obscurity of this city has led many scholars to suggest that an emendation to Mogontiacum (Mainz) is required. See, for instance, Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 313 n. 4. The further information, however, that specifies that this city was located in Germania Secunda (τῆς ἑτέρας Γερμανίας) would seem to argue against this identification, as Mainz was located in Germania Prima. With Blockley, I see little reason for the emendation, either textually or logically. Olympiodorus was providing a historical detail concerning the rise of Jovinus that is otherwise unattested. The location in which the usurper was proclaimed is no indication of where he had his court once his regime was established. See Blockley, *Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 216, n. 46.

[218] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17; Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 9.

[219] Scharf, "Jovinus", 4; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 288.

[220] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, as contained in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9. Drinkwater believes that Jovinus' usurpation occurred after the death of Constantine III in late 411. He therefore interprets Frigeridus' notice of the march of Jovinus' forces on Arles as a garbled account of the earlier arrival of Edobich's relief army bringing aid to the besieged Constantine. See Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 289 n. 136. See also Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 194 and Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 313. I, however, see no reason to doubt Frigeridus' account, especially given the fact that serious problems had plagued Constantine's regime since 409. Since establishing himself at Arles, Constantine's focus had been on Gerontius' revolt in Spain and the imperial center in Italy. This neglect had already caused the regions of Britain and Armorica to reject his control and it is probable that the Rhine frontier also experienced difficulties during this time. Under these circumstances, a new usurpation in Germania Secunda is completely plausible. My narrative therefore follows the reconstructions of Seeck, Demougeot, and most recently, Halsall. See Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 48-49; Demougeot, "Constantine III", 208-209; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 222-223.

his imperial title and had himself ordained as a priest, apparently hoping to reinforce the promises of safety that he received from Constantius with clerical membership.[221] After receiving their own assurances, the citizens of Arles opened their gates to the besiegers. Constantine and his surviving son, Julian, whom he had previously named *nobilissimus*, were sent to Honorius in Italy. Unfortunately for him, neither the oaths of the besiegers nor the priesthood was enough to save Constantine's life. Honorius had both the usurper and his son put to death thirty miles outside Ravenna.[222] The *Consularia Constantinopolitana* records the arrival of Constantine's head on a spear at Ravenna on September 18, 411.[223]

Sozomen's narrative suggests that after the capitulation of Arles and the capture of Constantine III, Gaul returned to the control of Ravenna. He ends his account of these events with a brief notice of the deaths of the usurpers Jovinus and Maximus, and other figures who had previously rebelled against the rule of Honorius. He thus maintains his theme of the divine favor accorded to the legitimate emperors of the Theodosian house.[224]

In reality, Gaul still had years of conflict left to endure. Previously, the news of the arrival of Edobich's relief army had alarmed Constantius and Ulfilas, briefly causing them to consider a withdrawal to Italy.[225] Apparently, only the proximity of the army caused them to stand their ground, a gamble that had ended in their favor. Now, with the army of Jovinus on the march, Constantius and Ulfilas faced either the uncertainty of a second battle or the prospect of finding

[221] Mathisen shows that Heros, the bishop of Arles at this time, was a partisan of Constantine III and would have performed the ceremony that raised the usurper to the priesthood. See Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 28-32.

[222] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 17 = Müller-Dindorf 16; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.15.

[223] *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, s. a. 411

[224] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.15.1-3.

[225] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.14.1-2.

themselves besieged within the city of Arles. As they had achieved their immediate objective in the capture of Constantine, they reasonably opted to avoid this trap and withdraw once again to Italy. The fall of a troublesome usurper was more than enough to prove the viability of Constantius' faction at Ravenna, and there was no need to risk undermining this success.

For the moment, Jovinus was therefore allowed to consolidate his gains and establish his new regime in the Gallic provinces. However, this respite was short lived. As we will see in Chapter 3, the year 412 would mark the entry of Alaric's successor, Athaulf, and his army into the Gallic political sphere. In a manner similar to Alaric's relationship with the eastern and western empires from 395-408, Athaulf's forces would prove a vital third party in the contest between the Gallic regime of Jovinus and the central court at Ravenna. Ultimately, Athaulf's actions would lead to the fall of the usurper's administration and the rise of something new: the establishment of an alternate Theodosian regime in the western empire.

Chapter 3: Athaulf and Placidia's Narbonese Regime

After the defeat and execution of Constantine III in the spring of 411, the usurper Jovinus was left to consolidate his power in the Gallic political sphere. The following year saw the movement of Athaulf's forces out of Italy and into the Gallic provinces. Athaulf initially formed an alliance with Jovinus. When relations between the two men became strained, however, officials of the emperor Honorius convinced Athaulf to turn against the usurper in return for supplies of grain for his followers. While Athaulf succeeded in destroying the usurper's regime in 413, Ravenna failed to deliver the promised grain, leading to a new breakdown of peace negotiations.

Athaulf and his followers then moved south, entering the southern Gallic provinces of Aquitania Secunda and Narbonensis Prima in the autumn of 413. The Gallic aristocrats of these provinces welcomed Athaulf's forces and allowed him to billet his troops on towns and estates along the Via Aquitania from Narbonne to Bordeaux. Athaulf also raised Attalus to the purple for the second time, establishing an imperial court in the city of Narbonne. Finally, in January 414, an event occurred that would have lasting consequences for the subsequent history of western Roman empire: the marriage of Athaulf and Galla Placidia.

While examining many points within this overall narrative, this chapter primarily focuses on events in southern Gaul in these years and offers new interpretations of the political significance of the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia. First, contrary to much earlier scholarship, it argues that the southern Gallic aristocrats who welcomed Athaulf and his followers in 413 were still in rebellion against the Honorian regime. This fact caused them both to view an alliance with Athaulf as a viable alternative to imperial reprisals, as well as to support his subsequent political initiatives, including the second usurpation of Attalus. This chapter also situates the usurpation

of Attalus in late 413, before the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia in January 414. This new sequence of events necessarily complicates traditional scholarly narratives of the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia, and offers new interpretive approaches to our primary sources for this period, such as Olympiodorus and Orosius. Finally, this chapter argues that the marriage of Athaulf and Galla Placidia represented the foundation of an alternative, yet potentially legitimate Theodosian regime in the western empire in direct conflict with the imperial administration of Honorius. While the usurper Attalus nominally held the imperial seat, the true strength of this new regime resided in the dynastic legitimacy inherent in Placidia's person as the offspring of the imperial houses of Valentinian and Theodosius. As such, the Narbonese regime of Attalus, Athaulf, and Placidia arguably represented to the most potent threat to Honorius' control of western empire during the period from 407 to 420.

With the retreat of the imperial army of Constantius and Ulfila in the late summer of 411, Gaul was left under the new regime of Jovinus. Coins bearing the usurper's name were struck at Arles, Trier, and Lyons. Gold emissions at each of these locations, as well as silver coins struck at Lyons, bear the legend *Restitutor Rei P*, suggesting that Jovinus, like Constantine III, claimed to have restored order to the chaotic political situation in Gaul.[226] Apart from these cities and their surrounding territories, the fragmentary state of the source tradition renders any attempt to

[226] *RIC* 10.152-154.

establish the precise extent of Jovinus' effective control of the Gallic provinces purely speculative.[227]

In early 412, mere months after his arrival on the historical stage, Jovinus was already forced to deal with the threat that would later cause his fall. Possibly as early as the autumn of 411, as Constantius laid siege to Arles, the army of Athaulf began to move once again.[228] A surviving fragment of Olympiodorus suggests that this initiative came from Attalus, who still resided with the army in an advisory position after his deposition in 409. Attalus, having learned of the usurpation of Jovinus, encouraged Athaulf to move his people into Gaul in order to lend his weight to the new usurper's regime.[229] It was furthermore reckless to remain in southern Italy. Athaulf's presence in this region left his motley army vulnerable either to the exhaustion of the food supply or the eventual retaliation of Ravenna. The victory of Constantius and Ulfilas over

[227] Sirago suggests that Jovinus' power was confined to northern Gaul, and that Constantius remained in control of the southern provinces. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 152-153. Sirago's interpretation, however, fails to take account of the numismatic evidence for Jovinus' control of Arles. Scharf, "Jovinus", 8-9, assumes that Jovinus failed to establish control over the Alpine provinces, on the grounds that Althaulf seems to have encountered no resistance upon his entry into Gaul in 412. Our sources for Athaulf's Alpine crossing, however, are meager and we cannot be sure of what resistance he may or may not have encountered. Finally, scholars such as Jones and Halsall maintain that Jovinus' regime did not include the region of Armorica, which according to Zosimus VI.5.3, had expelled its Roman officials during the reign of Constantine III. See Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 187; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 218. As we have seen, however, Zosimus' account describes the collapse of Constantine's regime. The "Roman magistrates" must therefore have been officials of this usurper. For this reason, Zosimus' testimony does not rule out the possibility that the citizens of this region may have recognized a usurper more to their liking in the person of Jovinus. For commentary on this passage of Zosimus, see Paschoud , *Zosime*, III. 2, 38.

[228] Sirago claims this as a reason for Constantius' decision to return to Italy. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 128. This is possible. As discussed in Chapter 2, however, the approach of Jovinus' relief army provides sufficient reason for Constantius' retreat into Italy.

[229] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17.

Constantine III, although due to luck and timing as much as skill, may have warned Athaulf of the latter potential outcome.[230]

Sometime in the spring of 412, Athaulf and his followers crossed the Alps and entered the Gallic provinces.[231] Our sources for subsequent events are few and fragmentary, allowing only glimpses of what were obviously complex political maneuverings between Jovinus, Athaulf, Ravenna, and their multiple officials.[232] It seems unlikely that Attalus had conducted any negotiations with Jovinus' regime before Athaulf set out for Gaul.[233] If such negotiations did take place, they could hardly have amounted to more than an invitation. In either case, any concord between the two parties quickly broke down into a purely nominal alliance.

[230] Halsall reaches similar conclusions. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 223.

[231] For the date, see Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 290.

[232] Sirago implausibly suggests that Athaulf and Honorius reached an alliance after the death of Alaric, which was sealed by the emperor's consent to the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia sometime in 411. Athaulf therefore entered Gaul as an ally of the imperial court. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 125-128. Sirago's hypothesis, however, is marred by his uncritical acceptance of the testimony of the sixth-century historian Jordanes which suggests that Athaulf and Placidia were married in Italy before the move of Athaulf's forces into Gaul. See Jordanes, *Getica* 159-161. Jordanes' narrative is untenable, however, as all contemporary sources place this marriage in January 414. (For a discussion of the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia at Narbonne in 414, see below.) Furthermore, Olympiodorus is clear that Athaulf entered Gaul in order to ally with the usurper Jovinus. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17. As a historical author, Jordanes is generally unreliable for events, particularly in the West, before the sixth century. He composed two histories, commonly known as the *Romana* and the *Getica*, in Constantinople sometime around the year 551. The *Getica* has generally received the most attention in scholarly circles due to Jordanes' claim in his prologue that he based his history on what he remembers from the now lost *Gothic History* of Cassiodorus. As Cassiodorus was the praetorian prefect of the late fifth/early sixth-century Ostrogothic king Theodoric, and therefore well placed to gather information, Jordanes' brief allusion has caused some scholars to consider the *Getica* an accurate representation of this earlier, presumably more reliable, work. For this reason, several of Jordanes' more controversial claims, particularly on the subject of Gothic pre-history, are accepted in some scholarly narratives. See, for instance, Wolfram, *Goths*, 1-18; Heather, *Goths*, 34-67. The relationship between Cassiodorus and Jordanes, however, is hotly contested in modern scholarship, as is Jordanes value as a historical source before the sixth century. See, for instance, Kulikowski, *Gothic Wars*, 49-56; Walter Goffart, "Jordanes's *Getica* and the Disputed Authenticity of Gothic Origins from Scandinavia." *Speculum* 80. 2 (2005), 379-398. With regard to political events in the early fifth-century western empire, Jordanes' narrative is generally both fanciful and often demonstrably false, as in the present case. As such, his value as a historical source for this period is questionable. For an excellent general study of Jordanes and his works, see in particular, Croke, "Latin Historiography and the Barbarian Kingdoms", 358-375.

[233] As shown by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 116 n. 114; Scharf, "Jovinus", 8-9.

Olympiodorus tells us that the arrival of Athaulf was unwelcome to Jovinus and that the latter blamed Attalus for advising the barbarian to come.[234]

As Scharf has suggested, Athaulf may very well have been acting on his previous experience of imperial politics, especially with regard to usurpers. As we have seen, Alaric had promoted Attalus to the purple and attempted to use him as an emperor who would support his ambitions and, failing that, as potential leverage with which to impose his demands on Honorius. When both options failed, he simply demoted his puppet outside the walls of Rome. Even at the imperial court in Ravenna, courtiers from Stilicho to Constantius were notorious for controlling the weak-willed legitimate emperor, Honorius. It is therefore plausible that Athaulf sought to fulfill the same role with the usurper Jovinus.[235]

Regardless, both parties displayed their intention of continuing to follow their own priorities. Athaulf, for his part, removed a potentially valuable ally for Jovinus when he attacked and killed the Gothic general Sarus. Sarus had served in the Roman army since the time of Stilicho, but his constant failure to find favor at the court of Honorius led to his frequently adopting the position of independent agent in the struggles between the court and Alaric.[236] In 412, he again broke relations with the court of Honorius and now sought to join Jovinus. Unfortunately, a

[234] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17.

[235] Scharf, "Jovinus", 4-5. Scharf's conclusion is also accepted by Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 223-224.

[236] As we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2, Sarus played a pivotal role in the events of the first decade of the fifth-century. Under Stilicho's command, he had almost succeeded in capturing Constantine III at the siege of Valence in 407 and thus ending the latter's usurpation at an early stage. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.2.3-4. He had also taken the side of the imperial court in fall of Stilicho in 408, killing the MVM's bodyguards and forcing him to flee to Ravenna. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.34.1-2. Sometime after this incident, he broke with the imperial court, yet remained in Italy as an independent agent with a small group of followers. Zosimus tells us that he was forced to rejoin Honorius' ranks when Athaulf attacked him in 409. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.13.2. Finally, Sozomen states that Sarus launched an unprovoked attack on Alaric's peace embassy to the imperial court in 410, which directly led to Alaric's third siege of the Rome and the eventual sack of the imperial city. See Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.9.3. For the relevant references to Sarus in the primary sources, see *PLRE* II: Sarus.

longstanding hatred with unknown causes existed between Athaulf and Sarus. Olympiodorus tells us that when Athaulf heard that Sarus was approaching with a meager force of no more than twenty men, he went out to meet him with a force of ten thousand. After fighting heroically, Sarus was captured and later killed.[237]

The end to Jovinus' and Althaulf's alliance came with the usurper's own display of independent action. At some time in 412, he raised his brother, Sebastianus, as co-emperor, against the will of Athaulf.[238] Athaulf may have wished Attalus to fill this position or he may have seen this action as a threat against his perceived role as the power behind the throne.[239] In any case, the rise of Sebastianus seems to have shown Athaulf that his new emperor would not be so easily controlled.

Athaulf's frustrations with Jovinus now found their vent through the overtures of Claudius Postumus Dardanus. Dardanus was probably a successful career bureaucrat, rather than a member of an aristocratic family. After serving in several legal and administrative posts, he held the office of praetorian prefect (PPO) of Gaul at some time in the first decade of the fifth century.[240] Dardanus, who possessed estates in Narbonensis Secunda, a province under Jovinus'

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[237] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17. Burns and Halsall have suggested that the later attested presence of Sarus' brother, Singeric, among Athaulf's forces in Spain in 415 shows that Athaulf recruited from the survivors of Sarus' band on this occasion. See Burns, *Barbarians*, 256; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226. This hypothesis, however, is untenable. The small number of Sarus' followers and their suicidal attack on Athaulf's numerically superior forces suggests that Sarus' followers in 412 represented his closest and most loyal retainers. Athaulf could hardly have trusted such men in his camp, much less the brother of his sworn enemy. It is therefore best to assume that Singeric had joined Athaulf's forces on some earlier occasion. See Chapter 4 for discussion.

[238] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 20.1 = Müller-Dindorf 19.

[239] As argued by Scharf, "Jovinus", 5; Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 290.

[240] The exact date of Dardanus' first tenure as PPO *Galliarum* is uncertain. A letter of Jerome dated to 414 states that he held this office twice. See Jerome, *Epistula* 129.8. *Codex Theodosianus* XII.1.171, dated December 7, 412, attests to his possession of the praetorian prefecture in this year. Combined with the evidence of Jerome, this would suggest his first time in this office must have occurred earlier. Martindale suggests either 401-404 or 406-407 as we do not

control, also seems to have been among the few Gallic notables who remained loyal to Honorius during the disruptions of the first decade of the fifth century.[241] Either as a private citizen on his estates or with the full administrative support of Ravenna through the second grant of the office of PPO *Galliarum*, Dardanus entered into negotiations with Athaulf at some time in 412. Athaulf promised Dardanus the heads of the usurpers and a peace treaty with Ravenna.[242] The sources do not tell us what was offered in return for Athaulf's efforts against Jovinus, but we may assume that the supply of grain for his followers was the baseline clause, as this demand would continue to echo throughout all future negotiations, in the same way that it had under the rule of Alaric.

With the alliance concluded, Athaulf openly broke with Jovinus' regime and set about its destruction. The precise order of events is unclear.[243] Sebastianus seems to have fallen into Athaulf's hands first. Olympiodorus reports that Athaulf sent his head to the legitimate emperor

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know who held the office in these years and by 408 Gaul was under the control of Constantine III. See *PLRE* II: Claudius Postumus Dardanus. Demougeot, however, suggests that Honorius' acceptance of Constantine III into the imperial college in 409 led to more administrative interaction between these emperors. She therefore proposes that Honorius appointed Dardanus to serve as PPO *Galliarum* under Constantine' regime. See Demougeot, "Constantine III", 115. While an interesting proposition, her argument relies on a misdating of the aforementioned *Codex Theodosianus* XII.1.171 to the year 409 rather than 412. Furthermore, Zosimus and Frigeridus provide the names of the men who held the praetorian prefecture under Constantine: Apollinarus and Decimius Rusticus. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.13.1; Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, as contained in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9. For this reason, Martindale's suggested dates are to be preferred.

[241] The *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, entry 69, states this specifically: "Through the activity of the strenuous man, Dardanus, who alone did not submit to the tyrant, Athaulf, who commanded the Goths after Alaric, was turned from the alliance of Jovinus." (*Industria viri strenui, qui solus tyranno non cessit, Dardani Ataulphus, qui post Alaricum Gothis imperitabat, a societate Iovini avertitur*.) Contrary to this testimony, Drinkwater suggests the possibility that Dardanus may have served for a time under Jovinus. This hypothesis would account for his ease of access to Athaulf in 412 as well as the hatred he earned from later Gallic aristocrats, as attested by Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistula* V.9.1. See Drinkwater, "Usurpers", 291-292. Drinkwater's suggestion is interesting, but the sources provide no support for this hypothesis.

[242] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 20.1 = Müller-Dindorf 19.

[243] For a full discussion of the sources, see Scharf, "Jovinus", 11-13.

at Ravenna.[244] Jovinus took refuge in the city of Valence. Only after a period of siege did Jovinus capitulate and enter into Athaulf's custody as a captive.[245] Some sources also mention the execution of a third brother, Sallustius, whose place in Jovinus' regime is unknown.[246]

The fall of Jovinus' regime was a particularly bloody affair, perhaps as much an indication of internal tensions among the Gallic aristocracy themselves as a visible warning against future rebellion. Frigeridus reports the death of Decimus Rusticius, who seems to have maintained his position as PPO *Galliarum* under Constantine III and Jovinus, and Agroetius, who served as *primicerius notariorum* under Jovinus. The generals of Honorius murdered these men along with many nobles (*multique nobiles*) of the Auvergne.[247] Apollinaris, the grandfather of the later Gallic poet Sidonius and one time PPO *Galliarum* under Constantine III, quite possibly shared this fate.[248]

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[244] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 20.1 = Müller-Dindorf 19.

[245] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 71.

[246] *PLRE* II: Sallustius 2. Unlike Sebastianus, we possess no coinage that attests to the regency of Sallustius. This fact makes it almost certain that he did not share the *imperium* with his brothers. For the essential links between usurpation and the minting of coinage, see John Drinkwater, "Silvanus, Ursicinus, and Ammianus: Fact or Fiction?", in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 7. ed. Carl Deroux (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1994), 568-576.

[247] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as preserved in Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.9. Scharf makes the case that Frigeridus, in specifying the highest and lowest office holders in the usurper's administration, actually implies the murder of Jovinus' entire civil regime. See Scharf, "Jovinus", 9-11. This is an interesting, though improbable, argument. While there is every indication that the Gallic purge was both vicious and terrifying to the region's prominent inhabitants, Scharf's hypothesis probably overstates the number of those who were actually executed by the Honorian regime in 413. For comparison, *Codex Theodosianus* IX.40.21, which was issued in the African provinces after Heraclianus' failed usurpation attempt in 412, calls for the execution of Heraclianus' accomplices. Nevertheless, it pardons soldiers and private individuals, as well as those who were compelled or forced to follow the usurpers' regime. Furthermore, Orosius tells us that Sabinus, the son-in-law of Heraclianus and an official in his administration, was merely exiled following his capture by Honorius' officials. See Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.14.

[248] As argued by Jill Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome AD 407-485* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 28-29.

The death of Jovinus himself was peculiar. After being passed from the custody of Athaulf to Dardanus, Honorius' praetorian prefect escorted him to Narbonne, rather than to the emperor at Ravenna, and executed him.[249] The significance of the city of Narbonne in this affair is obscure. In 1948, K. F. Stroheker argued that Jovinus had familial ties to this city, basing his conclusion on a passage from Sidonius Apollinaris' *Carmen* XXIII to his friend Consentius.[250] In this passage, Sidonius describes Consentius' mother "who, bearing the honors of ancient Jovinus to her husband's house, filled the home of a sophist with a magistrate's robes. Thus, within your own home, Consentius, proud glory of the fatherland, your grandfather lives through the calendar and your father through books."[251] Consentius and his family were native to Narbonne. If the Jovinus mentioned in Sidonius' poem as his friend's grandfather was actually the usurper, then the connection with Narbonne would be clear. Dardanus wished to punish Jovinus in the area of his strongest support, his native city.

This identification of the usurper Jovinus with the grandfather of Consentius, however, seems unlikely. Sidonius was a politically cautious writer. Even if the usurper Jovinus was the ancestor of a friend, it is improbable that he would speak of the man in such glowing terms, especially in a public document. When, in his writings, Sidonius has occasion to speak of his own family's

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[249] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 20.1 = Müller-Dindorf 19; Hydatius, *Chronicon*, 46 [54].

[250] See K. F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen und Reutlingen: Alma Mater Verlag, 1948), prosopography, 204. Stroheker was the first scholar to offer a study of the intertwining connections among the Gallic aristocracy. John Matthews further expanded this approach to include the aristocracies of Spain, Italy, and Africa in *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court, AD 364-425*. Matthews himself also maintains Stroheker's argument on the connections between Jovinus and Narbonne. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 315. This hypothesis also appears in more recent works, such as Scharf, "Jovinus", 6-7; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 20.

[251] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmen* XXIII.172-176: *quae domum ad mariti / prisci insignia transferens Iovini / implevit trabeis larem sophistae. / sic intra proprios tibi penates, / Consenti, patriae decus superbum, / fastis vivit avus paterque libris.*

past involvement with the civil discord of this period, the poet praises his ancestor, Apollinaris, while being sure to condemn the usurper, Constantine III.[252] Furthermore, Sidonius' mention of the *fasti* almost certainly indicates that the Jovinus in question was still recognized as the holder of a previous consulship. While it is probable that the usurper Jovinus claimed the consulship within his own realm for the year 411 or 412, his fall would have erased the name from even regional consular lists. Sidonius' statement, made at least fifty years after the death of Jovinus, would therefore make little sense if applied to the usurper. For this reason, it is best to follow the suggestion of the *PLRE*, which identifies the ancestor of Consentius as Flavius Jovinus, a Gallic officer who had a distinguished career as *magister equitum* under the successive emperors Julian, Jovian, and Valentinian, and was honored with the consulship for the year 367.[253]

Unfortunately, this identification leaves the significance of Jovinus' execution at Narbonne in the realm of speculation. Though we have no positive evidence, it is possible that Jovinus did indeed have relatives in the city. At the very least, we are probably safe in assuming that aristocrats of the city had supported the regime of Constantine III, and possibly that of Jovinus. Narbonne was the last major Gallic city along the Via Domitia, the Republican road that connected Rome with her Spanish provinces. In the fifth century, this road remained the primary military and commercial land route into Spain, making Narbonne an important communications hub for the empire at large. The extension of Constantine's power into the Spanish provinces in 407/408 would have required the collusion or forced subjection of Narbonne and her resident

[252] As shown by Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, 28-29. Harries notes the famous passage from Sidonius' letter to his friend Aquilinus (a descendant of Decimus Rusticus, who had served as PPO *Galliarum* under both Constantine III and Jovinus) in which Sidonius extols the virtues of their ancestors, while claiming that these same men had "hated fickleness in Constantine, shiftiness in Jovinus, treachery in Gerontius, individual faults in individuals, all faults at once in Dardanus." See Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistula* V.9.1: *…in Constantino inconstantiam, in Iovino facilitate, in Gerontio perfidiam, singular in singulis, omnia in Dardano crimina simul execrarentur.*

[253] See *PLRE* I: Flavius Jovinus 6; *PLRE* II: Consentius 2

aristocracy to the usurper's regime.[254] With the fall of Constantine, it is possible that the Narbonese aristocrats shifted their support to Jovinus in fear of reprisals from the newly aggressive administration of Constantius at Ravenna. Even if this were not the case, Constantius certainly seems to have intended the execution of Jovinus to serve, on some level, as a visceral lesson to the southern Gallic aristocrats on the dangers of supporting a usurper and as a sign of the reestablishment of Honorian control over Gaul.[255]

The execution of Jovinus at Narbonne may also have served a secondary purpose, closely related to the functional ties of this city to the Spanish provinces. With the forces of Athaulf in momentary alliance with Ravenna and the last usurper removed from Gaul, Honorius' court must have felt optimistic in 413, as one by one their previous troubles seemed to fall away. Borne along by this optimism, their next logical step in the reestablishment of imperial authority over the West would have been to move military activity into Spain in the near future. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that this was the next intended stop for Athaulf and his forces in their service to the imperial government. Rome had a long tradition of using barbarians against barbarians in securing their frontiers and, in fact, would resort to this exact method in 416 in order to bring Spain back under imperial control.[256] With Athaulf and his forces having proven their worth in overthrowing Jovinus' regime in Gaul, there was every reason for Constantius and

[254] Matthews also suggests this point, though his conclusion is intimately tied to his assumption that Jovinus came from this city. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 321.

[255] As argued by Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris*, 28.

[256] See, for instance, Constantius II's use of the Taifali and the so-called "free" Sarmatians against the Limigantes in Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XVII.13.19-20; Valentinian's use of the Burgundians against the Alamanni of King Macrianus in Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XXVIII.5.9-13. The late fourth-century *Historia Augusta* attributes this practice to Marcus Aurelius during the Marcomannic Wars, see *Vita Marci* 21.7. For the wars of Wallia's forces against the Alans and Siling Vandals in Spain, see Hydatius, *Chronicon* 52 [60], 55 [63], 58 [66] – 61 [69]; Orosius, *Historiae* VII.43.13-18. For general discussions of Roman foreign policy in Europe, see Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe*, 188-192; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 149-150.

the imperial court to have already begun formulating a plan to use them in Spain in 413. In this climate, and without the knowledge of the imminent revolt of Athaulf, one could easily imagine Dardanus receiving orders from Ravenna to issue a symbolic warning to the Spanish provinces which were still in rebellion, though now apparently leaderless after the deposition of the usurper Maximus in 412. The fact that a Spanish source, the chronicle of Hydatius, is our only surviving testimony to the location of Jovinus' execution certainly suggests that this warning was received and understood.[257]

Either simultaneously with the last stages of Jovinus' usurpation or closely following its suppression, Ravenna also faced a more direct threat from Africa. The *comes Africae* Heraclian launched his own revolt in the spring of 413, first withholding the grain supply, then launching a full invasion of the Italian peninsula. Before these events, however, Heraclian had possessed a long history of loyalty to the Honorian regime. He had received the control of Africa as a reward for the execution of Stilicho, an act he carried out personally in August of 408.[258] He had remained loyal to Honorius during the usurpation of Attalus, both withholding the grain supply to put pressure on the usurper's regime and disposing of the small force sent to unseat him. Incidentally, these actions played a large role in the withdrawal of Alaric's support from Attalus and the consequent collapse of the usurper's regime.[259] In recognition of his services, Honorius had made Heraclian consul elect for 413.

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[257] Hydatius, *Chronicon*, 46 [54].

[258] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.37.6.

[259] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.10; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.9.2; 11.1; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX.8.7.

Nevertheless, perhaps fearing the growing power of Constantius, Heraclian chose to revolt in the spring of his own consulship.[260] Orosius tells us that after withholding the grain supply for a time, he launched an invasion of Italy in the late spring of 413 with 3,700 ships.[261] A previously unknown *comes* Marinus met the forces of Heraclian near the town of Utriculum. The result was an unmitigated disaster for the usurper. According to Hydatius, 50,000 men lost their lives and Heraclian himself fled back to Carthage.[262] Marinus and the forces of Honorius pursued and executed the usurper, afterwards launching a purge of his suspected followers.[263] Heraclian's consulship was stricken from the consular *fasti* and the meager value of his estates was awarded to the man who had obviously overseen the operations in defense of Italy, the MVM Constantius.[264]

With the African threat removed, Constantius could now focus his energies once again on events in Gaul. It is precisely at this point, however, that the accord between Athaulf's forces and the court of Ravenna began to unravel. The surviving fragments of Olympiodorus suggest an on-going negotiation between the two parties. Athaulf, having fulfilled his half of the bargain with the destruction of Jovinus' regime, now demanded the promised grain from his partners in Ravenna. Ravenna, however, failed to deliver.[265] Oost has plausibly suggested that this failure

[260] As argued by Stewart Irvin Oost, "The Revolt of Heraclian", *Classical Philology* 61:4 (1966), 236-242.

[261] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.12-13.

[262] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.14; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 48 [56].

[263] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.14; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 48 [56]; *Codex Theodosianus* IX.40.21. The *Consularia Ravennatia* records the execution of Heraclian as having occurred on March 7, 413. Scharf believes that this date is incorrect. Based on both the testimony of Orosius concerning the grain fleet and the August date of the laws persecuting his followers and removing his consulship, Scharf argues that the execution of Heraclian occurred much later than the *Consularia Ravennatia* suggests. See Scharf, "Jovinus", 13.

[264] *Codex Theodosianus* XV.14.13; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 23 = Müller-Dindorf 23.

[265] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 22. 1 – 3 = Müller-Dindorf 21 – 23.

was linked to Heraclian's actions in withholding the African grain fleet. The Honorian regime simply could not fulfill its oaths to Athaulf without risking a revolt or urban riots closer to home. The Italian peninsula was after all still recovering from the devastations of Athaulf's own forces and the walls of Rome were once again filling with new and returning inhabitants. The grain in question, especially after Heraclian's deprivations, was needed for Roman citizens, not a sometime enemy.[266]

Halsall has also suggested that Ravenna or Constantius may have deliberately withheld the promised grain in order to force Athaulf to hand over Galla Placidia.[267] Halsall's solution, however, is far less probable as a cause of the initial break between Athaulf and the imperial court. Any agreement made with Athaulf in 412 would necessarily have included the return of Honorius' sister as a primary clause.[268] Even if Placidia somehow did not enter into the discussion between Athaulf and Dardanus in 412, both men must have known that any lasting treaty with Ravenna would have to include her return as a consequence. Regardless of the plans or feelings of Honorius, Constantius, Athaulf, or Placidia herself, she was simply too important as a member of the imperial house, and her hostage status too representative of the empire's recent woes, to remain among Athaulf's forces. For this reason, it is far more reasonable to envision the 412 agreement between Athaulf and the imperial court as consisting of a mutual exchange. Upon the overthrow of Jovinus, Athaulf would hand over Galla Placidia and Ravenna would provide the necessary grain to feed his followers. Only when Ravenna reneged on this agreement, yet continued to demand the release of Placidia, was the accord broken. Athaulf then began to entertain new possibilities.

[266] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 119-120.

[267] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 224-225.

[268] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 117-118.

Though still operating under the pretext of peace, Athaulf moved his forces south in late 413 and attempted to take the city of Marseilles in a surprise attack. The city was defended, however, by a soldier named Boniface, a man who was fated to play a large role in the political struggles of 420's and early 430's. Acting in an unknown capacity, Boniface quickly organized the city's defenses and managed to drive off the hostile forces, allegedly wounding Athaulf in the process.[269] His later promotion through the ranks in Constantius' regime probably hinged on the fame that he acquired in this engagement.[270]

Now in open revolt, Athaulf and his forces seem to have continued to follow the Via Domitia along the coast. According to Hydatius, they entered Narbonne in the time of the vintage, therefore sometime in the autumn of 413.[271] After the violence at Marseilles, the apparently peaceful reception that Athaulf's followers received in various cities of Narbonensis I and Aquitania II is noteworthy. There may have been some confusion over the semi-official status of Athaulf and his followers. Though he was now in revolt, lines of negotiation remained open between Athaulf and Ravenna, through the person of Constantius. [272] Contemporary sources such as Paulinus of Pella and Orosius maintain that Athaulf desired peace at this juncture.[273]

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[269] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 22. 2 = Müller-Dindorf 21.

[270] As argued by J. L. M de Lepper, *De rebus gestis Bonifatii, comitis Africae et magistri militum* (Tilburg: W. Bergmans, 1941) 18-20.

[271] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 47 [55].

[272] Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 159-160. Sirago notes that the presence of Galla Placidia among Alaric's forces may have played a role in the capitulation of Narbonne. The aristocrats of this city could simply claim that they were offering refuge to the sister of the Emperor Honorius.

[273] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 302-303; Orosius, *Historiae* VII.43.3. Paulinus served as *comes largitionum privatarum* in the usurper Attalus' administration from 413-414. In his later autobiographical poem, *Eucharisticus*, probably written in 459, Paulinus disparages both Attalus as well as his own participation in the usurper's regime, claiming that he was appointed to his office *in absentia*. Several scholars have plausibly argued that Paulinus' statements actually reflect the author's attempts to distance himself from his earlier affiliation with civil discord. See, for example, Paulinus de Pella, *Poème d'action de grâces et Prière*. trans. Claude Moussy (Paris: Éditions du

Though both of these authors may have had ulterior motives in making such claims, surviving fragments of Olympiodorus seem to confirm that Athaulf was actively attempting to promote a positive public image of his actions for Roman contemporaries. Olympiodorus tells us that Athaulf increased his demands on the imperial court, so that when they were not met, he might seem reasonable in refusing to hand over Galla Placidia.[274] Athaulf may therefore have convinced the southern Gallic aristocrats of Narbonensis Prima and Aquitania Secunda that he was a peaceful and reasonable man who had suffered from the dishonesty of imperial officials, yet was still operating within the regular processes of the imperial system. If the testimonies of Paulinus and Orosius are any indication, he was successful in this endeavor.

The most probable solution, however, is that the cities of these regions were still in quasi-revolt against Ravenna and saw the arrival of Athaulf's forces as a means of defense against the imperial government.[275] The end of the revolts of both Jovinus and Heraclian saw terrifying state purges of their supporters or perceived supporters.[276] Frigeridus' account of the Gallic purge provides a succinct notice of what must have been a process lasting months, as the imperial government slowly reestablished control over the provinces.[277] Even if Dardanus' execution of Jovinus at Narbonne was intended more as a threat to the Spanish provinces than to the cities of

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Cerf, 1974), 25; N. B. McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent: A Study of the 'Eucharisticos'", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995), 461-486. It is therefore possible that his claim regarding Athaulf's desire for peace at this time is a further example of Paulinus' desire to justify his past actions in choosing to ally with Athaulf. See chapter 4 for a discussion of Paulinus' *Eucharisticus* as a historical source for this period. For an evaluation of Orosius' testimony on Athaulf and Placidia, see below.

[274] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 22. 3 = Müller-Dindorf 22.

[275] Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 77-84.

[276] Jovinus: Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as preserved in Gregory of Tours, *Historia*, II.9. Heraclian: *Codex Theodosianus* IX.40.21.

[277] Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus as preserved in Gregory of Tours, *Historia*, II.9.

southern Gaul, it nevertheless carried a powerful message to any aristocrat who may have had connections to either Constantine or Jovinus. It therefore must have aggravated whatever climate of paranoia already existed. While it is reasonable to assume that these actions made some Gallic aristocrats averse to further antagonizing the Honorian regime, the peaceful entry of Athaulf and his followers into southern Gaul in 413 suggests that the majority of the inhabitants in these provinces were willing to make an alliance with the rebellious Gothic leader. As we have seen, the city of Narbonne was pivotal to the control of Spain, and therefore must have formed an essential part of the regime of Constantine III. This fact made the leading men of the provincial capital particularly susceptible to accusations of collusion with the usurper, regardless of whether or not their participation in his regime was voluntary. As such, they may have chosen to ally with Athaulf as an alternative to the very real possibility of imperial repression.

Whatever their reasons, the cities of southern Gaul seem to have welcomed Athaulf and his followers in the autumn of 413 and provided for their maintenance. The main court was situated at Narbonne, while aristocratic estates and cities along the Via Aquitania, including Bordeaux (Burdigala) and probably Toulouse (Tolosa), billeted various contingents of his troops.[278] Negotiations with the imperial court also seem to have continued, though according to

[278] In his *De reditu suo*, lines 493-496, Rutilius Namatianus mentions Victorinus, a former *vicarius Britanniarum*, who was forced to live in Etruria after the capture of his native city, Toulouse. Though Rutilius does not mention the perpetrators of this attack, scholarship has generally assigned it to the retreat of Athaulf's forces in late 414/415. See, for example, Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 54-57; Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 196-198; Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 90-91; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 162-164. Rutilius, however, was a staunch Gallic supporter of the Honorian regime during this period, who served in Italy as *magister officiorum* in 412 and urban prefect of Rome in 414. He probably composed his poem sometime after his return to Gaul in 417. Given the pro-Ravenna stance of the author, Rutilius' "capture" of Toulouse could just as easily refer to the non-violent submission of the city to Athaulf's control, as also occurred at Narbonne and Bordeaux in late 413. Victorinus' own previous service to Honorius' regime in Britain, his recent rise to the rank of *illustris*, as well as Namatianus' affectionate terms in describing him all suggest that he was a also staunch loyalist to the imperial court in Ravenna during the period of the Gallic usurpations. It is therefore possible to see Victorinus as an aristocratic citizen of Toulouse who wished to avoid collaboration with Attalus' regime and sought the safety of his Italian estates. For Rutilius Namatianus, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 325-328.

Olympiodorus, Athaulf now entertained new designs: marriage to the sister of the emperor, Galla Placidia.[279]

Contemporary works present both positive and negative views of the wedding of Athaulf and Placidia. Philostorgius and Hydatius, writers from opposite sides of the empire as well as the "Arian" / "Nicene" theological divide, both describe the marriage as nothing less than the fulfillment of biblical prophecies signaling tragedy for the Roman state.[280] Orosius, however, writing closer to the events, presents a more optimistic image in accordance with the theme of his work. Rome handed over Placidia as a hostage, by divine judgment, and "she, having been joined to the most powerful of barbarian kings in marriage, was a great benefit to the republic."[281] For Orosius, the marriage signaled the beginning of a new period of peace between

[279] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 22. 3 = Müller-Dindorf 22. As we have seen, Jordanes claims that Athaulf married Placidia at Forum Julii (Forli) in Amelia before his departure from Italy in 412, apparently with the consent of Honorius. See Jordanes, *Getica* 160. Many scholars have either accepted the veracity of this passage or at least suggested that Athaulf began negotiations for his later marriage to Galla Placidia at this time. Demougeot accepts Jordanes' testimony and attempts to reconcile his information with Olympiodorus by suggesting the improbable hypothesis that the marriage at Forum Julii in 412 was carried out according to "Germanic" custom, while that at Narbonne in 414 was a fully "Roman" wedding. See Émilienne Demougeot, "L'évolution politique de Galla Placidia", in *L'Empire Romain et Les Barbares d'Occident (IVe-VIIe siècle), Scripta Varia* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1988; originally published in *Gerión* 3 (1985) 183-210) 273-300. Nagl, *Galla Placidia*, 20-21, and Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 128-129, both offer the more probable suggestion that Jordanes' account offers a confused recollection of negotiations for marriage of Athaulf and Placidia. Both scholars also assert that the couple was formally engaged at this time. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no reason to accept Jordanes' testimony. As previously discussed, Jordanes is an unreliable source for events in this period. His account of the wedding of Athaulf and Placidia is set within a thoroughly fanciful account of Athaulf's actions in Gaul in Spain (*Getica* 159-163), and Athaulf's initial alliance with Jovinus (which goes unmentioned in Jordanes) would seem to speak against any alliance with Ravenna in 412. In my narrative, I therefore follow far more reliable, contemporary sources, such as Olympiodorus, in suggesting that Athaulf's decision to marry Placidia was formulated only after the breakdown of negotiations between Athaulf and Ravenna following the destruction of Jovinus' regime in 413.

[280] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII.4, though fragmentary, contains a reference to Daniel 2:31-45, wherein the prophet interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a statue with feet of iron and clay. Hydatius, *Chronicon* 49 [57] references Daniel 11:6 concerning the daughter of the "king of the south" marrying the "king of the north".

[281] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.2. *In ea inruptione Placidia, Theodosii principis filia, Arcadii et Honorii imperatorum soror, ab Athaulfo, Alarici propinquo, capta atque in uxorem adsumpta, quasi eam diuino iudicio uelut speciale pignus obsidem Roma tradiderit, ita iuncta potentissimo barbari regis coniugio multo reipublicae commodo fuit.*

the once savage barbarians and the Roman state, as Placidia influenced her husband to avoid war, to seek peace, and to govern well.[282] Finally, a sixth-century writer, Jordanes, describes the growing love of Athaulf for Placidia during their wanderings, as the barbarian king was attracted to the nobility, beauty, and chastity of the captured Roman princess.[283]

A famous fragment of Olympiodorus provides a vivid, though sadly brief, description of the wedding itself. In the decision to marry Placidia, Athaulf acted on the advice of a Roman citizen named Candidianus.[284] The ceremony took place in January 414, at the house of one Ingenius, a leading citizen of Narbonne.[285] Though both Romans and barbarians attended the festivities, the ceremony was conducted in a decidedly Roman fashion. Placidia was clothed in royal attire as befitted her status as a member of the imperial house, while Athaulf himself donned the garb of a Roman general. Athaulf then presented his new bride with a series of gifts. Among these were fifty young men dressed in silk, each bearing two bowls, one filled with gold, the other filled with precious gems, all taken from the sack of Rome. Attalus, followed by two otherwise unknown individuals, Rusticius and Phoebadius, then performed *epithalamia*, traditional wedding songs or poetic recitations for the couple.[286] The ceremony was then concluded amid much celebration among the Romans and barbarians in attendance.[287]

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[282] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.43.7.

[283] Jordanes, *Getica* 160.

[284] Some scholars have suggested that this Candidianus may be identical with the eastern general of the same name who, together with Ardabur and Aspar, overcame the forces of the usurper John and installed Valentinian III on the western throne in 425. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 188, Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 91 n. 111. I can find no reason, however, to support this view, especially as the name "Candidianus" is neither obscure nor unusual. I therefore agree with Martindale, who separates the individuals in *PLRE* II. See *PLRE* II: Candidianus 2 and Candidianus 3.

[285] The name Ingenius is sometimes rendered as Ingenuus. I follow *PLRE* II in my preference for the former.

[286] Frye argues for an emendation of Olympiodorus' text from "Rusticius" to "Rusticus", thereby suggesting that the poet who performed the epithalamium for Athaulf and Placidia was related to Decimus Rusticus, PPO of

Olympiodorus' account contains hints of both a functioning court in the Roman style as well as the official stance of this court with regard to the Honorian regime in Ravenna. The χλανίς that Athaulf wore on this occasion, equivalent to the χλαμύς or *paludamentum,* was the mantel of a Roman general.[288] While it is possible that Athaulf donned this clothing in order to advertise his pro-Roman sentiments, a more probable suggestion is that the χλανίς signified the fact that he held an actual Roman office.

Our sources on the events of the second reign of Attalus are few and fragmentary. We therefore have no real information on the exact date or the circumstances under which Athaulf chose to raise his client to the purple for the second time. Traditional narratives of this period place the rise of Attalus after the wedding of Athaulf and Placidia, seeing the action as Athaulf's response to either Ravenna's rejection of the marriage or as a consequence of Constantius' blockade of Narbonne.[289] More recently, however, Werner Lütkenhaus has argued that the second rise of Attalus actually preceded the wedding of Athaulf and Placidia. In his reconstruction, Athaulf raised Attalus to the purple in order to fill his puppet administration with the Gallic aristocrats of Aquitania Secunda and Narbonensis Prima, thereby cementing their

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Constantine III and possibly Jovinus. See David Frye, "A Mutual Friend of Athaulf and Jerome" *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 40. 4 (1991), 507-508. His further argument for the identification of this "Rusticus" as the source for Orosius' famous story of Athaulf's political change of heart is less than convincing.

[287] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 24 = Müller-Dindorf 24. Hagith Sivan attempts to illuminate this event with a discussion of contemporary wedding rituals as well as a general discussion of Roman attitudes towards marriage in late antiquity. See Sivan, *Galla Placidia,* 9-36. For general discussions of the wedding, see Nagl, *Galla Placidia*, 21-22; Sirago, *Galla Placidia,* 161-162; Oost, *Galla Placidia*,128-129.

[288] Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 217 n. 54.

[289] See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 197-198; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 162-163; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 130; Demougeot, "Galla Placidia", 280; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 317.

alliance against Ravenna. According to this view, Attalus may therefore have claimed the purple as early as the winter of 413.[290]

Olympiodorus' account seems to support Lütkenhaus' sequence of events. If Attalus were already emperor at the time of the wedding, then Athaulf's military mantel would have reflected his status as Attalus' MVM, the same office that Alaric had held during the usurper's first administration.[291] It also suggests that like his predecessor, Athaulf chose, whenever possible, to define his leadership position in the terms of the Roman administrative hierarchy. Recent work on the idea of "kingship" among the heterogeneous groups that followed Alaric and Athaulf suggests that this was an initially ambiguous position that emerged gradually over time and in response to specific political problems. Contemporary sources are inconclusive about the titles that these leaders assumed, though with regard to Alaric, they generally refer to his position in terms of the Roman hierarchy. As Athaulf, as far as we know, never held office in the legitimate administration, it is more probable that he used the title of king to define his position with regard to his followers.[292] Nevertheless, Olympiodorus' passage would suggest that when given the opportunity, he chose to shed the ambiguous title of "king" for the imperially recognized office of MVM, demonstratively trading a title that defined his position over a specific group of followers for one that signified his authority over both Romans and barbarians.

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[290] See Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 79-80.

[291] Sundwall first made the logical suggestion that Athaulf held the MVM position in Attalus' second regime, an idea that Oost also adopts. See Johannes Sundwall, *Weströmische Studien* (Berlin: Mayer and Müller, 1915), 204; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 130. Both scholars, however, see the second rise of Attalus as following the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia.

[292] As argued by Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 202-206. Halsall shows that a leader's assumption of the title rex was a visible sign of his failure to secure a place in the Roman military complex. For the development and general use of *rex* as a title in the late antique and early medieval periods, see also Gillett, "Was Ethnicity Politicized in the Earliest Medieval Kingdoms?," 85-121. In general, Gillett's article demonstrates that *rex* was a very late and sporadic adoption.

The active participation of no fewer than four named Roman citizens in the ceremony in addition to Attalus, also suggests that Athaulf had already formed a close alliance with the southern Gallic aristocrats against the Honorian regime. Ravenna had made its desire for the return of Placidia quite clear. Any individual participating in the ceremony therefore must have known that they were acting in violation of the imperial will. Even in a calm political atmosphere, such an action would have been considered dangerous. In the midst of the intrigue and state persecutions of 413/414, this action could have been nothing less than suicidal. For this reason, it best to see the Gallo-Roman aristocrats of Aquitania Secunda and Narbonensis Prima as already in full rebellion against Ravenna by January 414. It is simply not possible to assume that individuals who believed themselves answerable to Ravenna would have taken such a risk in the contemporary climate of paranoia and state persecution.

Finally, we should note that the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia itself represented a threat to the dynastic security of Honorius' regime. As discussed in Chapter 1, the female descendants of the dynasties of Valentinian and Theodosius typically remained unwed during their lifetimes.[293] While the Christian practice of celibacy certainly provided these women with new opportunities for the exercise of political influence, this dynastic tradition of chastity for women of the imperial family also served both to ensure the succession of imperial power through the male line of descent and to prevent the rise of cadet branches of the imperial family that would implicitly threaten the regimes of reigning emperors. Placidia's marriage to Athaulf directly

[293] In general, see *PLRE* I: Iusta 1, Grata, and Galla 2; *PLRE* II: Aelia Pulcheria; Arcadia 1; Marina 1; Iusta Grata Honoria. Of these women, Galla, the mother of Galla Placidia, married the reigning emperor Theodosius in 387/388 at a time of crisis in order to seal the alliance between Theodosius and her brother, Valentinian II. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV.44.1-4. Aelia Pulcheria married the emperor Marcian in 450, only after her brother, the emperor Theodosius II, had died without male issue. See Evagrius, *Historia ecclesiastica* II.1. Finally, Placidia's daughter, Iusta Grata Honoria, was married to a senator after an affair with her chamberlain provoked a court scandal. See Priscus, Blockley fragment 17 = John of Antioch, fragment 199.2. By all accounts, the rest of these women remained unwed during their lifetimes. See chapter 1 for discussion.

violated this tradition, opening the possibility of descendants who might challenge the Honorius' control over the imperial throne. As such, it constituted a very real act of rebellion against the Honorian regime.

Collectively, these factors complicate the traditional scholarly interpretations of the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia. Scholars such Sirago and Oost paint romantic portraits of the growing love affair of the barbarian king and the captured Roman princess.[294] Furthermore, Oost depicts Placidia operating in an advisory capacity to Athaulf, educating him in Roman law and culture and steering him towards peace with Ravenna.[295] Indeed, even the most sober scholarly narratives generally present the Narbonese regime as a tragedy, resulting from the failure of Ravenna to acknowledge or accept the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia. In this scenario, the hostility of Ravenna forced the couple into rebellion, leading to the second rise of Attalus as the head of this new regime.[296]

Ultimately, this traditional narrative seems to derive from a rather uncritical approach to the work of Orosius, an author whose presentation of the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia is heavily laden with traditional Roman stereotypes and prejudices as well as filtered through an entrenched thesis on the optimism of his own Christian era. In a famous passage, he relates the testimony of a citizen of Narbonne and former intimate of Athaulf whom he claims to have met while visiting Jerome in Bethlehem. According to this friend, Athaulf had once hoped to destroy the Roman Empire and build a new Gothic state, thereby replacing *Romania* with *Gothia*. He soon

[294] See, in particular, Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 126-127; 160-162; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 121-129.

[295] See Stewart Irvin Oost, "Galla Placidia and the Law" *Classical Philology* 63:2 (1968), 114-121.

[296] This view is almost universally accepted in the secondary sources. See Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 197-198; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 162-163; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 130; Demougeot, "Galla Placidia", 280; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 317; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 9-36.

discovered, however, that their barbarism made the Goths incapable of following the laws required by a state structure. He therefore decided to use his forces to support and augment the Roman state, thereby becoming the author of a restoration of Roman power.[297]

Halsall has recently argued that Athaulf's statement (if it is not a pure invention of Orosius) actually amounts to a joke on stereotypical Roman perceptions of "barbarians".[298] Nevertheless, Orosius presents this statement of Athaulf as a sincere change of heart on the part of an uncivilized barbarian, who came to recognize the inherent limitations of both himself and his people when faced with the majesty of Roman society and government. Orosius further presents Galla Placidia as the catalyst of this change. Earlier in his text, he describes Placidia's initial abduction and later marriage to Athaulf as parts of a divinely inspired plan, wherein Rome handed her over to the barbarians as a hostage for the benefit of the state.[299] For Orosius, Placidia was a civilizing principle, exerting Roman influence over the uncivilized, barbarian impulses of her husband, Athaulf, and turning him towards peace with Rome. While not grounds for completely discarding Orosius' testimony, these obvious rhetorical features at play in his text suggest caution in taking his depiction of the relationship of Athaulf and Placidia at face value.

For our purposes, perhaps the most questionable and misleading aspect of Orosius' text is his presentation of a simple Roman/barbarian political dichotomy as operating during a period of numerous usurpations, civil wars, and state purges of actual or suspected enemies. In this political atmosphere, Orosius' designation of "Roman" as automatically referring to the

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[297] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.43.3-6.

[298] Guy Halsall, "Funny Foreigners: Laughing with the Barbarians in Late Antiquity" in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 89-113; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 225.

[299] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.2.

Honorian regime at Ravenna can have had very little meaning in reality. As we have seen, there is every reason to assume that the southern Gallic aristocrats who welcomed Athaulf's forces into the cities of Aquitania Secunda and Narbonensis Prima were still in quasi-rebellion from the Honorian regime. It is also probable that Attalus had already taken up the purple for the second time in late 413. Finally, the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia constituted a direct dynastic threat to the regime of Honorius. For these reasons, it seems best to assume that Orosius' portrait of Athaulf and Placidia actually represents his attempt to smooth over the rough political realities of the Narbonnese regime for the purposes of his overall, optimistic thesis.[300] According to Orosius, Athaulf frequently claimed that he had decided to use his forces to restore the Roman state. We would be correct, however, to question which "Roman state" he was referring to: that of Honorius or something else altogether.

Recently, Werner Lütkenhaus has offered a more radical portrait of both Placidia and her marriage to Athaulf. Far from the idea of Placidia as the "helpless hostage", Lütkenhaus sees her as the center of a Roman senatorial faction working in alliance with Alaric and Athaulf against the prerogatives of the imperial court of Honorius. In his view, Placidia came into her own power during the turbulent Italian conflicts from 408-410. Though she was raised in the "Nicene" Christian tradition of the Theodosian line, Lütkenhaus suggests that Placidia came to lead a pro-"Arian" senatorial faction during these years. This faction favored the political policies and homoean Christian creed of her grandmother, Justina, and her uncle, Valentinian II, rather than the rule of the newly established Theodosian dynasty. Placidia and her faction also came to

[300] As noted in Chapter 1 with regard to Radagaisus and Alaric, Orosius conducts a similar obfuscation of contentious issues in his text with regard to the "Arian"/"orthodox" divide between barbarians and Romans. See Orosius, *Historiae* VII.37. 8-17; 39; 41.8-10. For this feature of Orosius' work, see also Zecchini, "Jerome, Orosius and the Western Chronicles", 326-329.

support the regime of Attalus, over that of her brother, Honorius. After the failure of Attalus' regime, Placidia willingly joined Alaric and his followers, seeking both to maintain her power and to avoid Honorius' reprisals. Thereafter, she became an advisor to Athaulf as well as a legitimizing figure, helping the barbarian leader to gain advantages and alliances with the Gallic aristocrats. Their marriage in 414 was nothing less than a common achievement for two ambitious individuals. While Athaulf once again raised Attalus to the purple, the strength of this new Gallic regime lay in the union of Athaulf's barbarian forces and Roman legitimacy through Placidia's membership in the reigning imperial dynasty. Placidia's participation was therefore an active attempt on her part to maintain homoean power outside the control of the regime in Ravenna.[301]

Lütkenhaus' reinterpretation of Placidia as an active political figure in the vicissitudes of imperial fortune in this period adds a welcome complexity to the standard scholarly trope of Roman/barbarian conflict. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no support in the sources for his suggestions that Placidia actively worked against Honorius during Alaric's successive sieges of Rome from 408-410 or that she ever adopted the homoean creed of Christianity.

Placidia's life is largely opaque for the years 408-410. As far as the sources tell us, she was involved in only one political action during this time: giving her approval to the senatorial decision to execute Serena, the widow of Stilicho and Placidia's cousin.[302] As we have seen, however, it is impossible to determine how much agency Placidia actually had in this decision.

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[301] Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 73-80.

[302] Zosimus, *Historia nova* V.38.1-5; Oympiodorus, Blockley fragment 7. 3 = Müller-Dindorf 1. 6. For discussion, see Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 429; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 85-86; Nischer-Falkenhof, *Stilicho*,154.

Even if we assume, as do scholars such as Demougeot and Oost, that Placidia actively promoted the death of her cousin, this action was still perfectly in keeping with the political policies of Honorius, who had previously given orders for the execution of Stilicho and Eucherius.[303] Contrary to Lütkenhaus' narrative of familial antagonism, the execution of Serena may therefore serve as evidence of Placidia's solidarity with her brother's regime in a time of crisis. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that Placidia joined Attalus' faction at Rome or that she willingly joined the forces of Alaric. While the dates of her transfer into Alaric's control vary, the sources unanimously declare that she was captured and served as a hostage among the forces of Alaric and Athaulf.[304]

Similarly, while it is tempting to assume that Placidia may have leaned towards homoean Christianity, especially after her marriage to Athaulf, the sources provide no evidence of her conversion to homoean Christianity at this, or any other time in her life. In fact, Placidia possesses an impeccable reputation for "Nicene" Christianity. She was a great patron of the church following her rise to the status of regent for her young son, the emperor Valentinian III, in 425, and her name is associated with a variety of "Nicene" ecclesiastical foundations in both Rome and Ravenna.[305] Just before her death in 450, she also directly intervened in the eastern

[303] Sirago, *La Nobilissima*, 22-23.

[304] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.40.2; VII.43.2; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 6 = Müller-Dindorf 1.3; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 410; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 36 [44]; Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.3. For discussions of Placidia's role in the execution of Serena and the date of Placidia's captivity, see Chapter 1.

[305] For Placidia's church building projects, see Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 61-84; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 160-167. Deliyannis plausibly argues that a now lost mosaic in Placidia's Church of St. John the Evangelist in Ravenna closely bound Placidia's imperial family to the Nicene tradition. This mosaic possessed portraits commemorating the emperor Constantine and several of the deceased male members of both branches of Placidia's imperial family, including the emperors Theodosius, Valentinian, Gratian, Arcadius, and Honorius, as well as the living representatives of the imperial family in both the eastern and western empires. Conspicuously absent, however, is any mention of Placidia's family members who followed the homoean creed of Christianity, particularly Placidia's uncle, the emperor Valentinian II.

dogmatic dispute concerning the teachings of Eutyches, whose Christological views would ultimately lead to the Council of Chalcedon in 451.[306] For this reason, Lütkenhaus' suggestion that she adopted homoean Christianity in her early life is untenable without the support of positive evidence.

Nevertheless, while his narrative of Placidia's actions during the events of 408-410 is probably incorrect, Lütkenhaus' assessment of her political role in the Narbonese regime of Athaulf and Attalus in the years 413/414-415 possesses the support of our primary sources and deserves real scholarly consideration. There is every reason to believe that the Narbonese regime, theoretically headed by Attalus, but grounded in the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia, represented a far more potent threat to the security and stability of the Honorian regime than did the administrations of any of the other usurpers of the period. We must therefore see the marriage at Narbonne in 414 as the moment of Placidia's emergence as a political actor in her own right, working for her own power by establishing an independent, yet dynastically legitimate imperial regime. With regard to Placidia's political actions, the main problem with Lütkenhaus' reconstruction of events lies in his assumption that the political motivations of Placidia in 413/414 represented continuity with her previous life at Rome rather than something

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See Deliyannis, Ravenna, 63-70. See also Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 165, who reaches similar conclusions. For the inscription, see *CIL* XI 276 = *ILS* 818, with Rebenich, "Gratian, a Son of Theodosius", 372-385.

[306] For a full discussion of Eutyches' Christological views and the political motivations of many of his supporters and detractors, see W.H.C Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 764-773. In brief, Eutyches was an eastern archimandrite who taught that Christ's being consisted of a single nature composed of both human and divine elements. His opponents, including the bishop Flavian of Constantinople, believed that Eutyches' teachings limited Christ's human nature. Though Eutyches' teachings were initially condemned as heretical, he received support from bishops such as Dioscorus of Alexandria and his views were accepted at the (later notorious) Second Council of Ephesus in 449. At the urging of Pope Leo I, Placidia composed letters to the Theodosius II (Leo, *Epistula* 56) and Pulcheria (Leo, *Epistula* 58) urging them to denounce the Second Council of Ephesus and submit to the authority and doctrinal interpretations of the Roman papacy. For Placidia's role in these events, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 288-292; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 134-141.

altogether new. The primary sources, however, cannot support such an interpretation. Placidia's political goals had changed dramatically in the years since her capture in 410. The question therefore becomes how and why this change had emerged. While any answer to this question must remain speculative, a comparison of Placidia's experience with the traditional tactics and assumptions of Roman hostage diplomacy provides enough grounds for a legitimate hypothesis to make the exercise worthwhile.

Along with her brother, Placidia had spent the majority of her life under the control of Stilicho and her cousin, Serena. The fall of Stilicho in 408 had offered a brief respite to the siblings, before Placidia again found herself a pawn in the power plays of others following her capture and subsequent tenure as a hostage among the forces of Alaric and Athaulf from 409/410-414. Zosimus claims that while in Alaric's camp, she received all of the honors due to her imperial rank.[307] We know nothing, however, of her experience among Athaulf's forces. Even if she was afforded the same consideration that she received from Alaric, she must also have shared in the difficulties and the material scarcity associated with their wanderings. Furthermore, her status as a captive among a group hostile to Ravenna, as well as a pawn in the negotiations between Athaulf and the imperial court, meant that she endured three years in a constant state of uncertainty and potential danger with regard to her ultimate fate.

During her long period as a hostage, she may also have come to see the inability of Ravenna to retrieve her as a sign of careless or willful neglect on the part of her brother. Indeed, some modern scholars have put forth a similar interpretation.[308] As the years passed and she shared the

[307] Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI.12.3.

[308] See, for example, Oost, *Placidia*, 105 n. 68, 118, and Sivan, *Placidia*, 24. The scholars who support this view seem to see Olympiodorus' mention of Galla Placidia in the negotiations of 413 as the first time the imperial court took any notice of her situation. This is almost certainly a fallacious assumption. Though no source mentions earlier

pains and sufferings of continuous travel, she may have come to see herself as a part of this new community, perhaps more valued among Athaulf's forces than by her own family. We know from her later life that she made friends and secured strong loyalties among this group, and there is no reason to think that they all came from the single year of her marriage to Athaulf.[309]

Collectively, Galla Placidia's experiences during this period share many features with the traditional Roman hostage diplomacy. We might therefore look to the general assumptions underlying Roman practice to explain Placidia's own subsequent change of perspective. Since the Republican era, hostage taking had formed an essential part of Roman treaty negotiations with foreign peoples.[310] Romans generally demanded hostages who were young, preferably male, and related to a prominent aristocratic family.[311] Roman hostage tenures were also of long duration, so that hostages could expect to spend years among their captors. As living assurances of their peoples' adherence to a treaty, these hostages lived under at least the potential threat of violence, though in practice, they were usually fully integrated into Roman life. Though it is

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negotiations with Alaric and Athaulf's forces, we should remember that there is significant break in our surviving narrative histories of this period after Zosimus' *Historia nova* ends in 409. Our remaining sources are either fragmentary or minimal, such as Olympiodorus and the chronicle tradition, or more concerned with theological issues than with providing a coherent narrative of political events, such as Orosius and Sozomen. Given this state of our source material, it is therefore difficult to maintain that Ravenna only attempted to negotiate for Placidia's return in 413.

[309] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

[310] The scholarship on Roman hostage taking in the Republican and early imperial eras is immense. See, in particular, Helmut Berve, "Sertorius," *Hermes* 64 (1929), 224-227; Aymard, "Les ôtages barbares su debut de l'Empire," *Journal of Roman Studies* 51 (1961), 136-142; M. James Moscovich, "Hostage Regulations in the Treaty of Zama", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 33.4 (1974), 417-427; "Obsidibus Traditis: Hostages in Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*," *The Classical Journal* 75.2 (Dec. 1979 – Jan. 1980), 122-128; Cheryl Walker, *Hostages in Republican Rome*, http://chs.harvard.edu/publications.sec/onlinr_print_books.ssp. Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, DC. 2005; Alain M. Gowing, "Tacitus and the Client Kings," *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-)* 120 (1990), 315-331; Joel Allen, *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[311] As shown by Walker, *Hostages*, 207-209.

nowhere directly stated in the sources, the collective evidence suggests that the Romans were pursuing an active policy of assimilation with their hostage diplomacy.[312] The youth of the hostage would ensure that his or her identity was more malleable and open to new influences. Further, the kind treatment they usually received, coupled with the constant threat of violence inherent in their hostage status, provided a strong psychological formula for identifying more with their captors than their own native culture. If successful, this practice had the potential to offer the Romans a strong advantage in foreign policy. As a male member of a prominent noble family, the returning hostage could be expected to take part in the governance of his home state. His newly forged Roman sympathies, however, might also make him more susceptible to Roman policy initiatives.[313]

With regard to the experience of Galla Placidia, it may be worthwhile to ask whether this Roman assimilation process could work in reverse. As previously discussed, Orosius presents the relationship of Placidia and Athaulf as one of superior Roman civilization "taming" the savagery of barbarian culture, a view informed by traditional Roman prejudices. In reality, there is nothing inherent in Roman culture that would prevent Placidia from assimilating to the culture of her captors. As we have seen, her relative youth, the trauma of her circumstances, and the long duration of her captivity closely reflects the formula the Romans themselves used in their own hostage assimilation policies. Furthermore, one can see in later events how closely another child hostage, the general Flavius Aëtius, identified with his former Hunnic captors during his early

[312] Berve "Sertorius," *Hermes* 64 (1929), 224-227 argues against the idea that this was a conscious feature of Roman foreign policy. Scholarship since the 1960s, however, generally accepts that Romans were at least well aware of the psychological effects of hostage taking, and few would argue that they failed to use this phenomenon to their advantage. See, for example, Walker, *Hostages*, 207-209; Allen, *Hostages*, 31-37.

[313] As argued by Aymard "Les ôtages barbares su debut de l'Empire," 136-142; Walker, *Hostages*, 34-36; 42; 207-208; Allen, *Hostages*, 28-29.

career.[314] With all of these influences, it is probable that she came to realize the inherent potential she possessed for securing and maintaining her own power. Even if she somehow failed to see the advantages, there were surely those among Athaulf's forces who could have suggested them. Attalus, already a leading member of the senate before his usurpation, was obviously quite skilled in the difficult and sometimes devious methods of Roman political maneuvering. Olympiodorus also credits an otherwise unknown man named Candidianus with providing the necessary push to ensure that the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia took place.[315]

Thus far in her life, others had used her status as the daughter of Emperor Theodosius for their own gain. The senatorial delegation that asked her permission to murder Serena gave her a taste of what was possible. Now, seemingly abandoned by her own people, a captive among a wandering army whose size and strength were significant enough to threaten Ravenna, Placidia must have realized that she could wield power in her own right. After all, she was the offspring of two imperial families. While Honorius' dynastic legitimacy came solely from Theodosius, she could also claim descent from the Valentinianic line, which had supplied the west with legitimate emperors for almost forty years. In comparison, the Theodosian line had probably arisen from usurpation in the east, while their direct control over the western empire was a relative novelty. Furthermore, she may have reflected that it was the marriage of her mother, Galla, to the

[314] A fragment of the lost work of the fifth-century historian Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus tells us that Aëtius' served as hostage for three years among the forces of Alaric and then for an unspecific amount of time among the Huns. See Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 8. While there is no evidence for close connections between Aëtius and the later Visigoths of Toulouse, Aëtius' continued relationship with the Huns formed a defining characteristic of his career. The Huns of Rua actively promoted his career against the wishes of the imperial court in 425 and 433. He also relied heavily on Hunnic auxiliary forces in his armies. See Prosper, *Chronicon*, s.a. 425, s.a. 432; *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 112, 115. For Flavius Aëtius' career, the best recent source is Timo Stickler, *Aëtius: Gestaltungsspielräume eines Heermeisters im ausgehenden Weströmischen Reich* (München: C. H. Beck, 2002). See also Chapter 7 for further a discussion of Aëtius' role in the events of 425 and the usurpation of John.

[315] *PLRE* II: Candidianus 2. See above for a discussion of his identity.

Emperor Theodosius that helped to smooth over the rough edges of this tenuous claim to the eastern empire. Finally, she had the example of her grandmother, Justina, who, though a woman, had effectively controlled imperial politics for over a decade as regent for her son, Valentinian II – Placidia's uncle.[316]

Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Placidia ever disparaged her father or his dynasty. It would, in fact, have worked against her own claims to power to sacrifice one branch of her lineage. It is in comparison to Honorius that her claims to legitimacy proved stronger, but not in stark contrast. In fact, Placidia named her first child Theodosius after her father, rather than Valentinian after her uncle or grandfather.[317]

Furthermore, her decision to ally herself to the forces of Athaulf may owe something to a famous policy decision of Theodosius.[318] After failing to defeat the barbarian peoples who had taken to marauding after the disastrous Battle of Adrianople in 378, he chose to extend peace to these same groups in 382, incorporating them into the empire in an obscure treaty.[319] In many ways, Alaric's demands to the imperial court from 408-410, certainly his request for lands for his

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[316] *PLRE* I: Justina. For Placidia's imperial lineage, see Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 73. I disagree, however, with Lütkenhaus' assumption that that the antagonism between the houses of Valentinian and Theodosius in the 380s and early 390s continued into color the relationship between Placidia and Honorius.

[317] Oympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

[318] As suggested by Demougeot, "Galla Placidia", 278-279.

[319] The primary sources provide very few details on the 382 treaty, beyond the fact that the barbarians were settled on Roman soil. For the meager evidence, see *Descriptio Consulum*, *s.a.* 382; Themistius *Oratio* 16 and 34; Synesius *De Regno* 19; *Panegyrici Latini* 2. 32. 3-4. The general scholarly consensus is that these barbarian groups were settled in return for service in the Roman army. See, for instance, Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 131-135; Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 64-66. Heather, however, notes that we have no evidence that the Gothic troops in Theodosius' army were serving out of obligation to the 382 treaty. See Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 158-165. Kulikowski concludes that the sources only show that peace was established in 382. They provide no strong evidence of the details of the treaty. See Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 148-153.

followers, suggest that he expected a similar policy decision from Honorius. Honorius and his changing cast of handlers, however, repeatedly failed to follow Theodosius' example. As previously discussed, we know little of the details of Constantius' negotiations with Athaulf in 413. It is probable, however, that Constantius was already planning to use Athaulf's forces to bring Spain back under imperial control. If, as Oost has suggested, settlement was also discussed, it was at best a distant possibility contingent on continued service to the Roman state.[320]

In Placidia's alliance with Athaulf, we may see some kernel of the Theodosian model of rapprochement. Athaulf's public statements concerning his desire for peace and his wish to use the forces at his disposal to support the Roman state certainly suggest the spirit of the 382 agreement, as does the apparent hope of a permanent settlement in the provinces of Narbonensis Prima and Aquitania Secunda. Placidia's consent to seal this alliance with marriage to Athaulf suggests that she supported these plans, possibly acting as their co-author. In her desire to use the forces of Athaulf to support the Roman state and helping to provide a permanent settlement, Placidia could reasonably call on the example of her father Theodosius.[321] Nevertheless, the power she acquired with this agreement clearly supported her own dynastic claims over those of Ravenna.

As we have seen, Orosius presents Athaulf as a man who, under Placidia's influence, desired peace and wished to use the forces of his uncivilized barbarians to support and restore the Roman Empire. For the purposes of his thesis on Roman/barbarian concord under Christian auspices, however, he deliberately obscures the full extent of the rebellion in which Athaulf and Placidia were then engaged. The wedding of Placidia and Athaulf signaled nothing less than the

[320] See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 117 n. 120.

[321] As argued by Demougeot, "Galla Placidia", 278-279.

establishment of a Roman court in direct conflict with Ravenna. Athaulf had probably already raised Attalus to the purple for the second time at least by January of 414, the date of Athaulf's wedding to Placidia. He had secured the allegiance of the southern Gallic aristocrats and had billeted his troops for the defense of this new regime on cities throughout the region. The true strength of the new regime, however, lay with the marriage of Placidia and Athaulf.

Even without the second usurpation of Attalus, the fact that Placidia took a husband at all, much less such a powerful figure as Athaulf, represented a serious act of treason against Honorius' regime. As we have seen, since the time of Valentinian, the daughters of the reigning imperial dynasty traditionally remained unwed, which ensured the security of the male line of descent. Placidia's decision to marry in itself therefore constituted a breach with imperial tradition and a very real threat to her brother's regime. The fact that Honorius was childless only served to increase the likelihood that the progeny of Placidia's union would one day threaten his hold over the imperial throne. The fact that she had married a powerful man, at that time in rebellion against Ravenna and in possession of his own strong, independent forces brought this threat into the present. In this light, the second rise of Attalus to the purple was simply a veneer over the rebellion's true locus of power. The usurper was a point around which to build an alternative Roman regime that would one day come to fruition with the birth of Placidia's son. As previously discussed, Orosius claims that Athaulf, in residence at Narbonne, often expressed the desire to use his forces to support and rebuild the Roman state.[322] If any real policy lies behind Athaulf's famous statement, it must refer to the new Roman regime that the barbarian king was then building with Placidia, not to Roman power in general, as Orosius suggests.

[322] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.43.3-6.

Returning to Olympiodorus' account of the wedding of Athaulf and Placidia, these conclusions may also provide some explanation for the exorbitant wedding gifts that Athaulf presented to Placidia during the ceremony. Olympiodorus clearly tells us that Athaulf acquired these slaves and valuables during the sack of Rome. Scholars who delay the second rise of Attalus to sometime after the wedding frequently note the irony that a barbarian leader presented these gifts to an abducted Roman princess in the midst of a celebration that included a Roman audience.[323] If we consider, however, the likelihood that Attalus, Athaulf, and Placidia were then in the process of building an alternative imperial regime with their Gallo-Roman allies, then it is possible to interpret the gifts as a political statement, rather than simply the uncouth gesture of a barbarian groom. In this context, the gifts would have served as a visible display of the regime's power and wealth to their new allies. The fifty young men did not carry gold and jewels stolen from fellow Roman citizens, but the spoils obtained from the defeat of a common enemy. We can see the entire display as Athaulf's representation of the military strength of his followers, a strength that Ravenna had repeatedly failed to defeat or even effectively control. Such a display could only have served to reassure the Gallic aristocrats of the strength of Attalus' regime and the safety that Athaulf's protection offered against potential imperial reprisals.

Unfortunately for all involved, the Narbonese regime of Attalus, Athaulf, and Placidia, raised with such promise, did not survive the year. It is possible that the regime faced problems from the outset because of the hesitant participation or active dissociation of some southern Gallic aristocrats. Paulinus of Pella claims that he was drafted into Attalus' service *in absentia*, while

[323] See, for instance, Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 129; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 316.

Rutilius Namatianus briefly mentions a friend named Victorinus, who had sought refuge in Etruria following the capture of his native Toulouse.[324]

The more pressing problem for Attalus' regime, however, was neither new nor easily remedied. Even those aristocrats who willingly supported the new regime faced the persistent problem of victualling Athaulf's immense host.[325] Supplying an army even in the best of times required both careful preparation and access to abundant stores. Attalus' regime, so recently established, possessed neither. Further, there is evidence that Gaul faced scarcity resulting in famine during these years.[326] If the southern provinces were among those affected, the presence of a large army could only have compounded local problems, leading to general unrest.

Finally, as we will see in Chapter 4, the regime faced a new threat from Constantius and the forces of Honorius. Swift and decisive action on the part of Ravenna was required to prevent the Narbonne regime from gaining momentum through gradual aristocratic acceptance. In addition, it is probable that Constantius saw the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia as a potent threat to his standing at the court of Honorius. This threat, however, seems to have ignited the general's ambition. By late 415, Constantius may already have been working to solidify arrangements for his own marriage to the sister of Honorius.

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[324] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 293-297; Rutilius Namatianus, *De reditu suo* 493-496. See above for discussion of both of these passages. For Paulinus of Pella, see also Chapter 4.

[325] As argued by Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 82-84.

[326] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 72.

Chapter 4: Failure of Narbonne and Barcelona

The marriage of Athaulf and Placidia, which provided Attalus' regime at Narbonne with a Theodosian dynastic foundation, presented a more potent ideological and political threat to the security of Honorius' throne than any other usurpation of this period. Consequently, Ravenna moved quickly to meet this challenge. The military action of Honorius' general Constantius caused the collapse of Attalus' Narbonese regime in late 414/415, forcing Athaulf, Placidia, and their followers to move south across the Pyrenees into Spain. Reestablished at Barcelona in 415, Athaulf and Placidia's dynastic hopes were strengthened with the birth of a son. Unfortunately, the child, whom they named Theodosius after Placidia's father, did not survive infancy. With Athaulf's own death at the hands of an assassin later in the same year, the threat to the Honorian regime was effectively nullified. After a brief, but bloody, period of political discord in the wake of Athaulf's murder, the dire situation of his followers forced them into alliance with Ravenna. One consequence of this new treaty was the return of Placidia to her brother's control in late 415.

This chapter examines several subjects within this overall narrative of the failure of Athaulf and Placidia's regimes at Narbonne and Barcelona. First, it offers a new interpretation of the *Eucharisticus* of Paulinus of Pella, our sole surviving source on the withdrawal of Athaulf's troops from southern Gaul in late 414/415. Traditional scholarly narratives have used the scenes of violence in Paulinus' poem to depict the withdrawal of Athaulf's forces as a chaotic event, complete with barbarians roaming throughout southern Gaul, looting and burning the homes of their former Roman allies. Against such notions, this chapter argues that Athaulf maintained peace with his Roman allies during the withdrawal, and that a critical reading of Paulinus' work indicates that the violence the author describes was a result of factions among Athaulf's troops

who were stationed in those areas furthest from the imperial court at Narbonne. Second, this chapter examines the evidence surrounding the assassination of Athaulf at Barcelona in 415, and the subsequent political discord amongst his followers, to conclude that the murder was the work of a single individual with a specific motive. Against the work of many scholars, this chapter therefore argues that the murder did not represent general discontent with Athaulf's leadership and that the eventual rise of Wallia as Athaulf's successor was predicated on his loyalty to his former king's regime. Finally, this chapter situates Placidia herself in the midst of the political discord following Athaulf's assassination. This chapter argues that, far from the traditional portrayal of Placidia as the captured Roman princess, she maintained her status as a Gothic queen amongst her deceased husband's followers, serving as a locus of power in her own right. We must therefore see Placidia's return to Honorius' control with treaty of late 415/416 as a consequence of the needs of her new community, rather than representative of her own individual desires.

As we have seen, the second usurpation of Attalus seems to have garnered support among many southern Gallic aristocrats in late 413. The subsequent marriage of Athaulf and Placidia on January 1, 414, further strengthened this regime, granting the aura of Theodosian dynastic legitimacy. In the climate of usurpation and Honorian imperial repression that pervaded the Gallic provinces from 410-414, these events were an ominous sign to the central government for the potential spread of Narbonese authority to other discontented regions.

Ravenna therefore moved swiftly against this new threat. Rather than risk his army in an uncertain engagement against Athaulf's numerous followers, Honorius' general Constantius chose a more effective, logistical method to combat the Narbonese regime. Athaulf's forces had faced problems of supply since their first appearance in the Gallic provinces in 412. Now billeted

on the cities and aristocratic estates of Narbonensis Prima and Aquitania Secunda, the burden of victualling Athaulf's immense host fell on the ministers and allies of Attalus' regime. Unfortunately for all involved, however, this task was poorly managed. Whether due to local scarcity or, more probably, to the fragile structures of a regime still in its nascent stages, Athaulf's troops required the importation of supplies from outside the region.[327] Constantius therefore imposed a complete naval blockade on Narbonne which prevented the importation of outside goods.[328] This act only served to aggravate the scarcity that Athaulf's forces were probably already facing in their new homes, making their continued residence in the region untenable. By the end of 414, Attalus' regime seems to have collapsed under this pressure.

The *Eucharisticus* of Paulinus of Pella provides our only detailed information concerning the withdrawal of Athaulf's forces from Narbonensis Prima and Aquitania Secunda. Paulinus composed this work late in life, probably in the year 459, while in residence at Marseilles.[329] Ostensibly, the *Eucharisiticus* is an autobiographical poem that describes the author's

[327] *Gallic Chronicle of 452,* 72, records a famine in Gaul, apparently during the year 414. If this famine affected the southern Gallic provinces, it would have further strained Athaulf's ability to provide necessary supplies for his troops. See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 162; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 219.

[328] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 1.

[329] Courcelle, following the text and commentary of Brandes, previously argued for a composition date of 455 for the main body of the poem and a date of 459 for the prologue and conclusion. His argument is based on a textual discrepancy in the *Eucharisticus*, in which Paulinus states his age as 83 at the time of the composition (lines 12-15), while later asserting that he returned to the orthodox faith thirty-four years ago *(…ter decies super et his quattuor annos…*) at the age of 45 (lines 474-478), suggesting that he was 79 years of age at the time of writing. See *Paulini Pellaei Eucharisticos*, ed. William Brandes, *CSEL* 16 (Vindobonae: Tempsky, 1888); Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 167 n. 3. A recent article by McLynn, however, argues convincingly that Paulinus composed the entire poem in 459. McLynn bases his argument on a textual emendation (first suggested by Barth and followed in White's Loeb edition) of problematic line 478 from *his quattuor annos* to *bis quattuor annos*, thus eliminating the four year discrepancy. See McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 463-467. See also C. Barth, *Ad Paulini Eucharisticum Animadversationes* (Leipzig, 1681), 290; Ausonius and Paulinus, *Ausonius* Vol. II, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (London: W. Heinemann, 1921). Most recently, Coşkun's has argued that the *Eucharisticus* was composed entirely in the summer of 460. He bases his argument on a close reading of the *Eucharisticus* regarding Paulinus' birth, as well as speculative outside evidence, suggesting that the poet was born precisely in August 377. Coşkun's argument is plausible, though I am uncertain if Paulinus' text lends itself to such chronological precision.

tumultuous path to salvation. In particular, Paulinus details the course of his life from the high expectations of his youth as the grandson of the Gallic poet and consul Ausonius to the variety of misfortunes that continued to plague him after the death of his father in 407 and the gradual loss of effective control of his property in southern Gaul due to a series of obscure events. Unfortunately, the poem is a problematic source, heavily laden with notable silences and apparently deliberate obfuscations. Furthermore, Paulinus' purpose in composing the poem remains open to debate.[330] Such features warrant far more caution than historians have typically used in approaching the information that Paulinus provides. Finally, much as we have seen in the scholarly use of Orosius, there is marked tendency to read preconceived notions of a strict "barbarian"/"Roman" dichotomy into the text of Paulinus. Such notions simplify the obvious complexities of a period of civil discord and inevitably color our understanding of Paulinus' account of historical events.

Paulinus served as *comes largitionum privatarum* in Attalus' administration, a position that he claims he received *in absentia* on the basis of his noble status. Unfortunately for our understanding of Attalus' regime, Paulinus devotes only a few, disparaging lines to his time at the Narbonese court, depicting his office as foolish and Attalus himself as disillusioned with his imperial prospects.[331] Such sentiments, however, may owe more to Paulinus' overall attempt in

[330] Scholars have traditionally seen the *Eucharisticus* as a spiritual exercise, noting the visible similarities between the poem and Augustine's *Confessions*. See for example, Paulinus de Pella, *Poème d'action de grâces et Prière*. trans. Claude Moussy (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1974) 19-22; Atlay Coşkun, "The 'Eucharisticos' of Paulinus Pellaeus: Towards a Reappraisal of the Worldly Convert's Life and Autobiography", *Vigiliae Christianae* 60:3 (2006) 285-315. McLynn, however, argues that the poem served a practical purpose as Paulinus' justification for the Marseilles community's continued support. See McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 478-486. McLynn's conclusions are interesting, though ultimately speculative.

[331] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 293-301.

later life to distance himself from his earlier affiliation with the usurper's regime, rather than providing an accurate depiction of his sentiments in 413/414.[332]

While his account of Attalus' administration is sparse and pointedly obscure, Paulinus devotes many lines to his experience during the withdrawal of Athaulf's troops from southern Gaul following the collapse the Narbonese regime in late 414/415. Indeed, Paulinus' scenes of destruction and barbarian violence directly relate to the primary theme of the *Eucharisticus* as a narrative account of the collective misfortunes of his life. As McLynn has aptly shown in a recent article on the *Eucharisticus*, however, this theme causes Paulinus both to exaggerate as well as occasionally repeat individual incidents of destruction for narrative effect.[333]

Paulinus tells us in the *Eucharisticus* that he first witnessed the looting and burning of his rural estate, followed quickly by the destruction of his native city of Bordeaux.[334] He then fled with his family and dependents to the neighboring city of Bazas, where they soon found themselves in the midst of a Gothic siege as well as a local uprising inside the city walls. In vague terms, Paulinus says that a few wicked, yet freeborn young men stirred up a faction of slaves for the purpose of killing certain members of the aristocracy. Paulinus himself was apparently targeted before the conspiracy was finally quelled.[335] Afterwards, Paulinus ventured out from the city and through his friendship with an unnamed king of the Alans, managed to gain

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[332] Moussy, *Poème d'action*, 25, suggests that Paulinus actively sought position in Attalus' regime. McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 470-472, further argues convincingly for the strength of Attalus' regime and Paulinus' willing participation. Stroheker and Matthews suggest that he was not the only Gallic aristocrat to support the regime. See Stroheker, *Der Senatorische Adel*, 46-49; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 321-325.

[333] McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 467-470.

[334] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 311-314.

[335] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 328-342. McLynn sees this conspiracy as directed against Paulinus alone as a former member of Attalus' regime, but there is nothing in the evidence that allows for decisiveness on this point. See McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 461-486.

their protection. In a formal negotiation with the leading citizens of Bazas, the king gave his wife and son as hostages. The Alan forces along with their wives then surrounded the walls of the city, prepared to drive back their former allies. The threat of conflict, however, seems to have prevented further violence and the rest of the besieging force melted away, soon followed by the Alan defenders themselves.[336]

Scholars have traditionally allowed the episodes of destruction and violence in Paulinus' poetic narrative to color their accounts of the withdrawal of Athaulf's forces. The student of the period is therefore greeted to chaotic images of barbarian forces wandering throughout the southern Gallic provinces, sacking the cities and aristocratic estates of their former Roman allies.[337] Some scholars depict Athaulf himself leading these actions, while others suggest that the devastation represented a failure of Athaulf's leadership, foreshadowing his assassination in Barcelona in 415.[338] Such interpretations however rely on a rather casual acceptance of Paulinus' testimony as well as traditional scholarly stereotypes of "barbarian"/"Roman" conflict. A very different image of this period emerges if we combine a close reading of the *Eucharisticus* with the known political complexities of this period. Far from the image of wandering barbarian hordes, this reading situates Paulinus' episodes of destruction as the work of a few factions

[336] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 372-405.

[337] See, for example, Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 54-57; Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 196-198; Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 90-91; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 163-165; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 162-164; T. S. Burns, "The Settlement of 418," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 54-55. All of these scholars suggest that Athaulf conquered southern Gaul in 413, and once again subjected the region to violence before moving into Spain in late 414/415. As we have seen, however, the entry of Athaulf and Placidia into Narbonensis was not in any way an act of conquest.

[338] Athaulf's leadership is implicit in the accounts cited above. See also Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, 34; C. E. V. Nixon, "Relations between Visigoths and Romans in fifth-century Gaul," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 64-74; McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 472-472. For the violence of 414 as evidence of Athaulf's failed leadership, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 131-132; C. E. V. Nixon, "Visigoths and Romans", 68-69; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86-88.

operating without approval at the furthest geographical distance from Athaulf's political control. Even in these regions, however, the consequent destruction was mitigated by the presence of other factions who remained loyal to Athaulf's orders for a peaceful withdrawal.

Paulinus' testimony of the devastation associated with the withdrawal of Athaulf's forces shares many similarities with Orosius' account of the sack of Rome. Both narratives betray the factional nature of the forces under the command of Athaulf and Alaric, which could result in independent and sometimes protective action.[339] Paulinus' account in particular suggests the wide variety of personal experience in dealing with Athaulf's troops. He notes that many members of the Gallic aristocracy received protection for themselves and their estates from their barbarian "guests", citing his own failure to billet Athaulf's troops as the reason for the subsequent destruction of his property.[340] Even so, his oppressors on this occasion allowed both him and his dependents to withdraw without injury.[341] He seems to suggest that later, during the siege of Bazas, certain members of the attacking army wished to harm him directly, and only a secret alliance with his friend, the unnamed Alan king, spared him from their ill intent.[342]

Many scholars have suggested that Paulinus' account of the unnamed Alan king indicates that some political breakdown within the ranks of Athaulf's military accompanied the failure of the Narbonese regime.[343] Paulinus tells us that his Alan friend suggested their alliance "obviously

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[339] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 39. 1-14. Courcelle provides an excellent overview of the primary source literature concerning the sack and the variety of individual experiences. See Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 50-56.

[340] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 285-290.

[341] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 320-323.

[342] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 362-363.

[343] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 131-132; Nixon, "Relations between Visigoths and Romans", 68-69; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86.

knowing that the Goths again threatened me with terrible things, and desiring to free himself from the law of these same people."[344] After the threat to Bazas had passed, the king and his followers departed "prepared to protect the promise of peace with the Romans, wherever fortune, having been presented, might have born them."[345]

Scholarship has generally taken these statements to mean that this Alan king broke his alliance with Athaulf and went on to ally with the Roman army of Constantius, receiving settlements in Aquitania.[346] This interpretation is sometimes buttressed by the identification of the king as Goar, a leader of the Alans who chose to ally with the Romans during the Rhine crossing of 406 and later appears in the sources as a king of the Alans under the command of Aëtius in the 440s.[347] There are no grounds for the identification of Paulinus' Alan king as Goar, however, and few modern scholars still accept this notion.[348] Nevertheless, this earlier, erroneous identification still seems to exert an influence on interpretations of this event, specifically the

[344] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 362-363: *…gnarus quippe Gothos rursus mihi dira minari / seque ab ipsorum cupiens absolvere iure.*

[345] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 396-398: *…et nostri, quos diximus, auxiliaries / discessere, fidem pacis servare parati / Romanis, quoque ipsos sors oblata tulisset.*

[346] Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 188; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86. Lot, Bachrach, Moussey, and Mathisen suggest that the Alans received a settlement, which would suggest alliance with Ravenna. See Ferdinand Lot, "Du régime de l'hospitalité", *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 7:3 (1928) 975-1011; Bernard S Bachrach, *History of the Alans in the West from their First Appearance in the Sources of Classical Antiquity through the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), 29-30; Moussey, *Poème d'action*, 164-165 v. 346, 171 v. 397; and Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, 71. Sirago offers a confused narrative that sees the Alans of Goar as already allied to Ravenna and having received settlements in Aquitania before the arrival of Athaulf into the region, which is impossible and contradicted by all evidence. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 157-158, 166.

[347] *PLRE* II: Goar. Levison, "Bischof Germanus von Auxerre", 135; Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198; Lot, "Du régime de l'hospitalité", 1007 n. 6; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 166; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 188, Moussey, *Poème d'action*, 28, 164-165 v. 346, 168 v. 378; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 164.

[348] McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 474, n. 76 describes the king as "minor chieftain", which is probably accurate. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, 34 & 55 implausibly identifies the king as Athaulf.

assumption that this group of Alans broke with Athaulf's forces and joined the Roman army of Constantius, receiving settlements in southern Gaul as a consequence. While this hypothesis requires a basic, and in some ways, strained reading of Paulinus' text, it still possesses some merit with regard to military history. The loyalty and numbers of any ancient army were contingent on the success of their endeavors and their prospects for future gain. This was particularly true for coalitions such as those of Alaric and Athaulf, though Roman armies could prove no less fickle on occasion, as the recent history of usurpations had shown.[349] The failure of the Narbonese regime and the uncertainty of the immediate future may have damaged Athaulf's reputation among some of his followers. Undoubtedly, the political situation seems to have led to some breakdown of public order as well as at least the potential for large-scale desertions.

Nevertheless, this interpretation of the Alan incident at Bazas ignores both the political complexities of 414 and also the sometimes misleading language of Paulinus' text. In particular, neither of Paulinus' statements concerning the objectives of the unnamed Alan king serves as an indication of political action. Paulinus exhibits a literary feature common to many fifth-century writers in repeatedly referring to all of the followers of Athaulf as "Goths". This collective term, however, presents the illusion of a political and military monolith, thereby obscuring the evident presence of factions among Athaulf's followers and their widely divergent actions in dealing with former allies in the Roman aristocracy.[350] As previously discussed, factions among these "Goths" variously protected the estates of their Roman hosts; sacked Paulinus' own estate, but allowed him to leave with his life; and then threatened his life at Bazas. The soldiers who protect

[349] Michael Kulikowski, "Nation versus Army: A Necessary Contrast?", in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002) 69-84; Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 5.

[350] For the presence of factions in Athaulf's forces at this time, see Moussy, *Poème d'action*, 30; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 131-132; Nixon, "Relations between Visigoths and Romans", 68-69; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86-88.

the city of Bazas only become “Alans” in Paulinus’ text when they remove themselves from the general horde of “Goths” and ally themselves with the author and the city of Bazas. This fact indicates that we cannot take his use of the generic word “Goths” as precise or technical term at all.

In fact, Paulinus’ literary trope of the “Gothic” monolith, which acts in contradiction to his narrative of independent action among these “Gothic” factions, suggests a more specific reading of his statement regarding the Alan king’s desire to break with the Goths. The Latin reads *gnarus quippe Gothos rursus mihi dira minari / seque ab ipsorum cupiens absolvere iure.* (The Alan king, “obviously knowing that the Goths again threatened me with terrible things, and wishing to free himself from the law of these same people.”).[351] Thus far in his narrative, Paulinus has described two other groups of “Goths”, some that had protected their Roman hosts, and others that had guaranteed his safe passage. The “Goths” in this line must refer to a different group, specifically to the faction besieging Bazas, who (unlike the previously mentioned groups) wished him personal harm. The use of *ipsorum* in the following line links the Alan king’s desire for independence from the “Goths” to this same faction operating at Bazas, rather than to the collective military following of Athaulf. In this more nuanced reading, the actions of the Alan king would differ from Paulinus’ other examples of independent, protective action only in scale, not in type. The Alan king and his following protected Bazas until they were sure that the besiegers had departed. Then, they themselves withdrew to rejoin the rest of Athaulf’s forces.

The traditional interpretation of the Alan king’s desire for peace with the Romans, still unconsciously colored by the old and false identification of him with Goar, suggests that he

[351] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 362-363.

wanted to join the ranks of Constantius' army. That interpretation, however, requires a far more strained reading of Paulinus' text than the one presented here. Paulinus' actions at Bazas served as a crowning achievement of his political life as an influential Roman aristocrat.[352] If he could claim that he not only negotiated the deliverance of Bazas, but also influenced a significant body of troops to transfer their allegiance to the legitimate regime of Ravenna, he surely would have made this clear. Paulinus composed his text decades after the events of 414, yet he gives us absolutely no indication of the fate of his barbarian partners in this most famous of his political enterprises. The final words that he provides on "our auxiliaries" (*nostri … auxiliaries*) are that they wandered off "…wherever fortune, having been presented, might have borne them" (*…quoquo ipsos sors oblate tulisset…*).[353] These words suggest that he did not know what had become of his Alan defenders at Bazas or that the details of their fate were irrelevant to the narrative he was constructing. Although it is an argument from silence, the silence here is noteworthy, and it should give us pause before we assume any dramatic change in the unnamed Alan king's political affiliation.

Scholarship has also made the same assumptions of a monolithic entity behind Paulinus' term "Romans", as they have with his use of the term "Goth". With the end of the Attalus' Narbonese regime, narratives of this period typically devolve into the standard "Romans" versus "barbarians" trope.[354] Paulinus' use of the term "Romans" in this case is almost universally read to mean not simply Roman citizens, but specifically the Honorian regime as led by

[352] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 318; Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, 54-55.

[353] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 396-398.

[354] See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198; Demougeot, *De l'unité*, 538-539; Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 90-95; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 188; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86.

Constantius.[355] This interpretation, however, in no way reflects the realities of 414 or the usage of the term "Roman" in Paulinus' text. As we have seen, Athaulf, Placidia, and southern Gallic aristocrats, including Paulinus, raised an alternate regime in 414 directly opposed to the Honorian administration at Ravenna. Even after the collapse of this Narbonese regime, there is no reason to assume an immediate return of southern Gallic support to the Honorius. In fact, the purges following the collapse of the regimes of Constantine III, Jovinus, and Heraclian would undoubtedly have caused some hesitation on the part of these aristocrats. The use of the term "Roman" in Paulinus' account is therefore better understood as a general indication of ethnic identity in this context, as opposed to any political allegiance.

Paulinus' statement that the Alan king was "prepared to protect the promise of peace with the Romans" (…*fidem pacis servare parati / Romanis*…) seems simply to confirm the Alan king's commitment to avoiding violence with Roman citizens. In the context of the year 414, we should note that Athaulf himself had been promoting the same public policy since 413, and there is little reason to suggest that this policy had changed after the fall of the Narbonese regime at the end of the following year.[356] As we have seen, though Paulinus' account does supply evidence of violence associated with the withdrawal of Athaulf's army, such violence was apparently the haphazard work of individual factions, as opposed to the coordinated action of troops following Athaulf's orders. For this reason, it is significant to note that both Bordeaux and Bazas were situated at the opposite end of the Via Aquitania from Narbonne, the center of Attalus'

[355] See the accounts of Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198; Lot, "Du régime de l'hospitalité", 975-1011; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 188; Bachrach, *History of the Alans*, 29-30; Moussey, *Poème d'action*, 164-165 v. 346, 171 v. 397; and Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats*, 71; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86.

[356] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 302-303; Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 3. For a similar interpretation, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 132.

regime.[357] The safety of distance probably allowed the troops stationed in these areas to indulge in unsanctioned looting before joining up with the main body of Athaulf's forces outside Narbonne and departing for Spain. Conversely, we have no evidence of Narbonne or its environs suffering any depredations in this period.[358] This evidence would suggest that Athaulf attempted to maintain peace with his former allies among the southern Gallic aristocracy even after the collapse of Attalus' second regime and the forced relocation of his troops beyond the Pyrenees.

A close reading of Paulinus' text therefore results in a narrative far more in keeping with the political realities of late 414. After the collapse of Attalus' regime, Athaulf ordered the troops billeted on various towns and aristocratic estates along the Via Aquitania to assemble near Narbonne, without doing harm to the persons or lands of their former allies. All armies of the period, however, Roman or barbarian, were predatory on civilian populations.[359] These "natural" depredations probably varied in proportion to the distance from the center of command at

[357] Some scholars have suggested that Bordeaux was the seat of Attalus' regime. See Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 91; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 165; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 164; McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 471-473. This idea seems to derive from both Paulinus' participation in Attalus' regime and the author's statement that the city received the "Goths" in peace (line 312), but in particular from the assumption that the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia occurred before the second usurpation of Attalus. The resulting narrative is therefore that the marriage took place at Narbonne in January 414 and the second rise of Attalus occurred sometime in the spring, after Ravenna had proved hostile to the union and Athaulf's forces had moved into the province of Aquitania Secunda. This reconstruction, however, is untenable. Paulinus never claims that Attalus, Athaulf, or Placidia were ever resident at Bordeaux. Furthermore, Lütkenhaus' convincing argument that the second usurpation of Attalus preceded the marriage of Athaulf and Placidia, allows us to read Olympiodorus' account of the wedding as a portrait of a functioning imperial court situated at Narbonne in 414. As there is no evidence that this court moved from Narbonne, we must therefore read Paulinus' "Goths" at Bordeaux as members of Athaulf's army billeted on an allied city. In general, see Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 79-80. For Olympiodorus' account of the wedding of Athaulf and Placidia, see Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 24 = Müller-Dindorf 24.

[358] The only other potential reference to violence appears in the *De reditu suo*, line 496, with Namatianus's brief mention of the "capture" of Toulouse. This is an obscure reference, however, as the poet provides no indication of time or circumstance. Furthermore, Rutilius Namatianus' Latin phrase *capta Tolosa* could have a variety of non-violent interpretations if we consider his firm alliance to the Honorian regime and the fact that Toulouse probably capitulated with Athaulf's forces along with Narbonne and Bordeaux.

[359] Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) 84-90.

Narbonne, with the worst enacted at the opposite end of the Via Aquitania around Bordeaux and Bazas. Nevertheless, Paulinus tells us that even in Bordeaux, some troops protected their hosts from the ravages of these unsanctioned attacks. Later in the poem, he also describes the fate of his sons who sought to reclaim some of his property in the city.[360] Both of these points suggest that we should see some exaggeration in his claim of the destruction of Bordeaux, though the event itself was no doubt terrifying to the poet and his dependents.

After fleeing to Bazas, Paulinus soon found himself in the midst of a siege at the hands of some of these rebellious factions. He was able to find a way out of this predicament, however, through his friendship with one of the subordinate leaders of these troops. This unnamed Alan king, like the aforementioned "Gothic" guests who protected their hosts, had no desire to assault his former political allies among the Romans. He therefore worked with Paulinus to separate from the troops besieging the city. Paulinus specifically states that these Alan troops were not allowed inside the walls of Bazas. Nevertheless, the threat of conflict was enough to break the siege and force the besiegers to disperse.

Paulinus tells us that the Alans themselves then departed a short time later "prepared to protect the promise of peace with the Romans, wherever fortune, having been presented, might have borne them." The former phrase (…*fidem pacis servare parati / Romanis.*…) fits well with Athaulf's political rhetoric, while the latter (…*quoque ipsos sors oblata tulisset.*…) clearly suggests that the Alans were about to embark on a journey to an uncertain destination. As such, it is far better to see Paulinus' statement as an apt description of the dismal prospects that lay before all of Athaulf's followers in late 414, rather than some poetic reference to the uncertainty

[360] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 498-507.

of life in the Roman army. For this reason, the best reading of Paulinus' text suggests that this Alan king departed Bazas to rejoin the followers of Athaulf at Narbonne.

Paulinus' narrative of the Alan king at Bazas is therefore a large-scale example of the independent, protective actions of Athaulf's troops in a time of crisis. If we assume, as seems probable, that Athaulf's orders for the reconstitution of his forces were in keeping with his previous policy of peace with the Romans, then the Alan king would scarcely need to worry about reprisals from Athaulf. The fact that the forces under his command were sizable enough to ward off a besieging army also suggests that he had little to fear from his previous commanders at Bazas, now engaged in looting. There is therefore no reason to think that the Alan king would have faced direct reprisals once he had rejoined Athaulf's forces at Narbonne.

We have no information on the final days of the Attalus' Narbonese court. While some officials, such as Paulinus, seem to have broken their ties to the regime, it is probable that others accompanied Athaulf's troops upon their departure from the region in late 414 or early 415. Though the evidence is lacking, the only alternative for these Gallic aristocrats was to remain in the region and face the potentially devastating reprisals of the Honorian regime, which were now all too familiar to the aristocracy of Gaul.[361]

Furthermore, there is no reason to suspect that the imperial aspirations of Athaulf and Placidia ceased with the transfer of their residence further south to Barcelona. Constantius had managed to successfully manipulate the problem of supply among Athaulf's army and their southern Gallic allies. The true strength of Athaulf and Placidia's alternative imperial regime, and thus the threat to Ravenna, was nevertheless growing quickly despite the move to Spain. Placidia had

[361] As we have seen, a similar circumstance had led to both Attalus' and his son, Ampelius' permanent residency among the followers of Alaric and Athaulf. See Zosimus, *Historia nova* VI. 12. 3.

conceived a child sometime during their residence in Narbonne.[362] Now with a pregnant Roman princess in southern Gaul and a childless emperor on the throne in Ravenna, the couple and their supporters could seriously envision the culmination of their plans for eventually assuming control over the Western Roman Empire. We should therefore see the move south of the Pyrenees as a strategic retreat, rather than an end to Athaulf and Placidia's alternative imperial regime.

A clear understanding of the experience of Attalus in late 414 has the potential to shed further light on the immediate plans of the roaming court. Unfortunately, no fewer than three roughly contemporary sources offer accounts in complete contradiction of one another. Prosper, who composed the first edition of his chronicle in 433, claims that the "Goths" abandoned Attalus when they crossed into Spain. Without their protection, he was captured and delivered to Constantius.[363] The Spaniard Orosius, however, who finished his providential history in 418 and was therefore writing closer to the events, claims that the "Goths" carried Attalus into Spain, from whence he boarded an untrustworthy ship and was captured at sea.[364]

Philostorgius, whose *Ecclesiastical History* only survives in Photius' ninth-century epitome, offers a third possibility. He claims that after the murder of Athaulf, the Gothic king's followers handed over both Placidia and Attalus to Honorius as part of their peace agreement with

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[362] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

[363] Prosper, *Chronicon*, s.a. 415: *Attalus a Gothis ad Hispanias migrantibus neglectus et praesidio carens capitur et Constantio patricio vivus offertur.*

[364] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 9: *Attalus itaque tamquam inane imperii simulacrum cum Gothis usque ad Hispanias portatus est, unde discedens navi incerta moliens in mari captus et ad Constantium comitem deductus…* The *Chronicon* of Marcellinus Comes, written in the early sixth century, contains a similar statement on the fate of Attalus, under the year 412. The fact that the author provides brief biographical account of Orosius under the year 416, however, suggests that this information derives from the *Historiae* as opposed to another, independent source.

Ravenna in late 415/416.[365] While Philostorgius published his history shortly after 425, scholars typically disregard the account due to both the eastern origin of the source and the fragmentary state of its transmission. It is worth noting, however, that Philostorgius was probably using the work of Olympiodorus.[366] His testimony is therefore worth considering, even if the geographical proximity of Orosius and Prosper necessarily give them pride of place on this topic.

Nevertheless, each of the contradictory accounts offers a plausible scenario for the capture of Attalus. In considering Prosper's testimony, we should note that Attalus' capacity for independent policy had previously caused problems in 409, leading Alaric to finally strip him of his imperial regalia.[367] A similar sequence of events could have occurred in 414 leading to conflicts with Athaulf, especially after the pregnancy of Placidia rendered Attalus' imperial standing superfluous to the regime. Furthermore, this would explain the fact that the mint at Barcelona, where Athaulf and his followers settled in the following year, produced no new coins in Attalus' name.[368]

While there is no clear reason to deny the validity of Prosper's account, the closer temporal and geographical proximity of Orosius to the events, as well as the specificity of his details regarding the capture of Attalus, may collectively suggest a better claim to represent actual events. As "compromise" solutions to this conundrum, we might suggest two scenarios. In the first, Athaulf abandoned Attalus as Prosper suggests. In an attempt to flee Constantius' troops,

[365] Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* XII. 4.

[366] Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, I. 28-29.

[367] Zosimus, *Historia Nova* VI. 12. 1-2.

[368] For Attalus' gold and silver emissions at Narbonne, however, see *RIC* 10. 346.

the usurper took to the sea where he was captured by one of Constantius' patrol ships. This possibility finds favor in some scholarly narratives of this period.[369]

A second scenario incorporates more of Orosius' account. While Athaulf and the main body of his troops set out along the Via Domitia to cross the Pyrenees, a second, smaller group which included Attalus, attempted to take the easier water route. We have no idea of Attalus' age at this time. The fact that he seems to have already possessed a distinguished career in the early 390's, however, suggests that he may have been of advanced age.[370] Even regardless of age, however, the wanderings of the past years must have taken their toll on all of Athaulf's followers and crossing a mountain range in mid- to late winter with few supplies was no easy prospect. As such, Attalus along with some of other followers of Athaulf might have preferred to risk the water route rather than embark on the difficult trek which lay before the bulk of the army. Since Constantius' ships enforced a strong blockade on Narbonne, this smaller group would have claimed whatever vessel they could procure from one of the smaller ports between Narbonne and the foothills of the mountains, with the intention of rejoining the main body of troops on the other side of the Pyrenees. The vessel they obtained, however, proved unreliable and they were easily overtaken by one of Constantius' patrol ships. Prosper's assertion that the "Goths" had abandoned Attalus might therefore simply result from a misinterpretation of the events of late 414/415.[371]

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[369] See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 198-199; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 166-167; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 132-133.

[370] *PLRE* II: Priscus Attalus 2.

[371] Matthews and Wolfram also seem to reject Prosper's testimony that Athaulf abandoned Attalus, though they do not offer detailed narratives. Matthews has Attalus captured at sea during the general chaos of Athaulf's retreat into Spain. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 318. Wolfram suggests that Attalus was captured during the crossing of the Pyrenees. See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 164.

Finally, we might completely accept Orosius' account. In this interpretation, Attalus entered Spain with Athaulf and settled with the rest of his followers in Barcelona. The assassination of Athaulf in 415, however, resulted in swift and harsh reprisals against his family and dependants, including Galla Placidia.[372] In this hostile climate, Attalus lost his primary protector and any hope of support. He therefore attempted to flee his former allies by sea, only to fall into the hands of Constantius.[373] While generally following Orosius' testimony, this final scenario may receive some support from both Prosper and Philostorgius. Both of the latter authors suggest that Athaulf's followers rejected Attalus. Philostorgius further correlates Ravenna's acquisition of Placidia and Attalus to the period after the death of Athaulf.[374]

What is certain is that with or without Attalus in tow, Athaulf led his followers along the Via Domitia, crossing the Pyrenees and arriving in Spain sometime in early 415. From here, they seem to have followed the Via Augusta along the coast until they reached Barcelona (Barcino). The inhabitants of Barcelona seem to have accepted them peacefully, in much the same way as had the cities of southern Gaul, and perhaps for many of the same reasons, including fear – not of Athaulf, but of the government in Ravenna.[375] As late as 411, the city had served as the mint for

[372] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

[373] Halsall favors this reconstruction. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226.

[374] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 4. Stein accepts this conclusion. See Stein, *Histoire*, I. 267. Unlike the circumstances of his capture, the ultimate fate of Attalus is clear in the sources. In a public display of political theatre at Rome, Attalus suffered mutilation in the imperial presence and was exiled to the island of Lipari. Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 9; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 5. Prosper suggests that this occurred in the year 417. See Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 417. The *Chronicon Paschale*, however, records two celebrations held at Constantinople on June 28 and July 7, 416, in honor of the usurper's defeat. See *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 416. If these celebrations were meant to coincide with Honorius' triumph at Rome, then Attalus' mutilation may belong to 416, rather than 417.

[375] Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 168.

the usurper Maximus.[376] While soldiers apparently operating in the name of Honorius had deposed Maximus in 412, the extent of Ravenna's actual control over the Spanish provinces at this time is uncertain.[377] It is therefore possible that the citizens of Barcelona were still in quasi-revolt from the Honorian regime and welcomed Athaulf's protection against potential imperial reprisals. This reaction of citizens of Barcelona also speaks against the common scholarly interpretations of widespread violence in the southern Gallic cities following the end of the Narbonese regime.[378] If all of these cities had suffered the alleged fate of Bordeaux and Bazas, the inhabitants of Barcelona would have had little reason to trust the intentions of their new "guests". As the sources stand, however, there is no evidence of resistance or destruction at Barcelona and Athaulf seems to have maintained peaceful relations between his followers and the city's inhabitants. As in southern Gaul, the main body of Athaulf's troops was probably billeted on towns and aristocratic estates in the surrounding province of Tarraconensis.

As at Narbonne, the marriage of Athaulf and Galla Placidia formed the foundation of their claims to *imperium*. Either before their departure to Barcelona or during their residency, the potential of this union came to fruition in the birth of a son, whom Athaulf named Theodosius after Placidia's father.[379] Some discussion of the name's significance is commonplace in scholarship, though given the circumstances of 414/415, one can hardly imagine the couple

[376] *RIC* 10. 351.

[377] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 5. Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 163-165 and in particular, 366, n. 69.

[378] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 131-132; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 225-226; McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 472-473.

[379] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

choosing something else.[380] The name served as perfect propaganda for Placidia's legitimacy as a member of the Theodosian house and as an articulation of the regime's political aspirations as better heirs to the Theodosian regime than was Honorius.[381]

Olympiodorus cryptically suggests that Athaulf and Placidia began to act on these aspirations soon after the birth of their child. He claims that after Theodosius was born, Athaulf became even more amicable towards the Romans. The couple's attempt met failure, however, "due to Constantius and those around Constantius acting in opposition…"[382] The author provides no indication of what this "effort" or "attempt" (ἡ…ὁρμή) constituted, though the mention of Constantius' faction suggests that this was some type of negotiation with the court at Ravenna. Athaulf and Placidia were probably attempting to use the birth of Theodosius to reach an independent agreement with Honorius.[383] As previously discussed, such an agreement had the potential to directly threaten Constantius' position as the main power behind Honorius' throne. Even if Athaulf did not immediately assume this role, the growing influence he would have assumed as the father of his son, Theodosius, who would probably be Honorius' successor, clearly meant that the general's prospects were dismal. It is therefore little wonder that

[380] Wolfram suggests that Athaulf and Placidia chose the name to invoke the famous decision of Theodosius the Elder to make peace with the barbarians of 378 and find a place for them in his empire. See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 163. Such sentiment, however, would have been at odds with the message that Athaulf was already a part of the empire by virtue of his marriage to Placidia.

[381] For the name "Theodosius" as an advertisement of the regime's political inclinations, see Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 167-168; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 133-134; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 220; Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 240.

[382] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26: Κωνσταντίου δὲ καὶ τῶν περὶ Κωνστάντιον ἀντιπραττόντων ἔμενεν ἄπρακτος ἡ τούτου καὶ Πλακιδίας ὁρμή.

[383] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 134. A cabal, including Justina and the general Merobaudes, forced a similar *fait accompli* proclamation of Valentinian II on the Emperor Gratian in 375. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XXX. 10. 4.

Constantius' faction at Ravenna moved to block any possibility of peace between the two imperial regimes.

Fate, it seems, was also on Constantius' side. Theodosius, the child of Athaulf and Placidia, and potential heir to the western empire, died at Barcelona sometime during 415. Infant mortality rates were very high in the pre-modern era, even for those at the highest ranks of society, and no source provides us with details concerning the cause of his death.[384] The death of Theodosius was a devastating blow to Athaulf and Placidia. Olympiodorus provides some details regarding the funeral. The grieving couple placed their son in a silver coffin and buried him at a small chapel outside Barcelona.[385]

As political leaders, the death of Theodosius meant that Athaulf and Placidia now possessed neither grounds for reconciliation with Ravenna nor anywhere near as solid a foundation for their own imperial regime. Nevertheless, this need not have signaled the end of Athaulf and Placidia's efforts toward *imperium*. Optimistically, Placidia's pregnancy and successful childbirth had shown that their aspirations were quite plausible. Placidia was fertile and the couple could easily expect more children in the future. Their endeavor simply required time and patience.

In the summer of 415, however, Athaulf was murdered by one of his dependants, a man named Dubius, during a customary inspection of his horses in the stables. According to Olympiodorus, Dubius acted to avenge Athaulf's killing of his former master, an unnamed "king of part of the Goths" (μοίρας Γοτθικῆς ῥήξ). Though accepted into Athaulf's service, Dubius

[384] For infant mortality in the ancient world, see Gillian Clark, "Roman Women", *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, 28:2 (1981) 193-212; Mark Golden, "Did the Ancients Care When Their Children Died?", *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, 35:2 (1988) 152-163; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 48.

[385] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

nevertheless held a secret grudge and waited for the right time to carry out this blood vengeance.[386]

Scholars often assert, or at least suggest, that the unnamed Gothic king of the passage is Sarus, one of the key players in the events of 406-412, who met his end in Gaul at Athaulf's hands. This identification receives some support from the fact that Olympiodorus goes on to relate that Singeric, the brother of Sarus, both succeeded to Athaulf's position as leader and carried out his own blood feud against the latter's family upon his accession.[387] The image that emerges is therefore of a larger conspiracy to remove Athaulf from power and claim leadership over his followers.[388]

The identification of the unnamed Gothic king as Sarus, however, is problematic. First, though Sarus appears relatively frequently in the fragments of Olympiodorus, the author never refers to him as a "king" (ῥήξ), nor does any other fifth-century source.[389] Sarus only becomes a "king" in sources from the sixth century, specifically Marcellinus Comes and Jordanes.[390] In the fragments of Olympiodorus he appears either in the employ of the empire or, at best, leading a

[386] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26. Jordanes, *Getica* 163 claims that Athaulf's murderer was named Euervulf, and attributes the cause of the dispute to Athaulf's constant mocking of the man's height. Some scholars accept Jordanes' account. See, for example, Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 58; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 134; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 165; Burns, *Barbarians*, 259-261. Jordanes is a later historian, however, and generally unreliable for events in the western empire during the fifth century, even where it can be shown that some distant echo of Olympiodorus survives in his text.

[387] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

[388] See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 199; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 167-168; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 318; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 165-166; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 220; Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe*, 11; Heather, *Roman Empire*, 240-241; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226, all of whom suggest that the king slain by Athaulf was Sarus.

[389] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 37. 12 refers to him as a leader (*dux*) of the Goths.

[390] Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon* s.a. 406.3; Jordanes, *Romana* 321. This probably results from the sixth-century authors adopting contemporary titles to describe fifth-century individuals. For the development of the title *rex*, see Gillett, "Was Ethnicity Politicized in the Earliest Medieval Kingdoms?", 85-121.

small, independent group of followers.[391] Furthermore, Olympiodorus clearly separates the murder of Athaulf from the rise of Singeric in his account. The murder of Athaulf is treated as an isolated incident, the work of a single individual with both independent agency and motive. While Olympiodorus openly credits the accession of Singeric to a conspiracy that overturns the proper order of Gothic succession, he in no way connects this conspiracy to back to Athaulf's murder.[392]

Olympiodorus' account of the murder of Athaulf finds some confirmation in the roughly contemporary, though admittedly brief, testimonies of Prosper and Hydatius. Both chroniclers attribute the murder to a single individual among Athaulf's men.[393] Only Orosius seems to suggest a wider conspiracy, claiming that Athaulf was killed "by the treachery of his own people" (*dolo suorum*).[394] Orosius makes no attempt to tie the assassination to Singeric or his faction, however, instead suggesting that Athaulf's successor obtained the kingship through popular support.[395]

For these reasons, while a larger conspiracy is possible, it seems best to interpret the death of Athaulf as the result of a private feud. Athaulf killed Dubius' former master, an unknown Gothic king, at some shadowy point in the past.[396] Like the origins of the attested feud between Athaulf

[391] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 6 = Müller-Dindorf 3.

[392] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26. Wolfram notes this problem. See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 165.

[393] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 415; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 52 [60].

[394] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 8.

[395] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 9: *Post hunc Segericus rex a Gothis creatus…*

[396] Olympiodorus actually states that this occurred "long ago" (πάλαι), which does not accord with the recent death of Sarus. Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

and Sarus, the incident with Dubius' master probably predates Athaulf's own appearance on the historical stage in 408.[397] Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that this unnamed king was Sarus, and little reason to see Dubius as in some way connected to Singeric's faction among the followers of Athaulf. Rather, the evidence suggests that Dubius acted on his own motivations. Perhaps the recent downturn in Athaulf's political fortunes, particularly the death of his son, Theodosius, had created an environment in which Dubius finally believed that he had a chance to act. While some encouragement from the faction of Singeric is a valid possibility, there is nothing in Olympiodorus' text to support the assumption that Singeric was anything other than the lucky beneficiary of Dubius' act.

Regardless, the murder of Athaulf left a leadership vacuum at the head of his massive, multiethnic coalition which resulted in political chaos, as various factions seem to have competed to assume command. This resultant chaos is perhaps the best evidence that we should doubt any scholarly narrative that presents Athaulf's death as somehow inevitable, the result of his followers' common discontent with his leadership.[398] Though his political plans had recently taken a turn for the worse, Athaulf's previous actions had successfully transformed him from a mere barbarian leader of group of malcontents into a true late antique statesman, capable of successfully negotiating on behalf of his people with both Roman aristocrats and the imperial government. His marriage to Galla Placidia had launched him to the heights of imperial politics, making him a viable alternative for many Romans to the heavy-handed and often incompetent rule of Ravenna. While some discontent with his rule may have existed between and among the

[397] Zosimus, *Historia Nova* VI. 13. 2.

[398] As suggested by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 131-132; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 220; Nixon, "Visigoths and Romans", 68-69; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 86-88; Heather, *Roman Empire*, 240-241.

various factions under his control, the chaos that followed his death shows that there was simply no other obvious candidate with both the status and credentials to fill his role. In life, Athaulf had almost succeeded in meeting the needs of his people by establishing an alternative imperial regime; with his death, Athaulf's followers became exactly what their enemies wished them to be: simply another group of barbarian outsiders infesting the imperial state. Athaulf's death was therefore probably seen as a tragedy among his followers, rather than a welcome change of leadership. No other leader could expect the same level of acceptance on the imperial stage.

Olympiodorus' account suggests that Athaulf was fully aware of this situation on his deathbed. The author tells us that Athaulf, in his last moments, instructed his brother to return Galla Placidia and seek peace with the Romans. Such instructions represent the dying wishes of a statesman more concerned with the safety and security of his people than the personal desires of his immediate family. There is little reason to think that Placidia herself would have welcomed such a course of action. As previously discussed, Placidia faced dismal prospects should she return to Ravenna. After the events of the past two years, she could expect the scorn of the imperial court and the possibility of a traitor's death. Even if she could convince Honorius and his advisors that she had not been a willing participant in the designs of Athaulf, the best she could hope for was monastic seclusion, safely imprisoned and forgotten in the walls of a religious establishment or the women's quarters of the imperial palace, which as her eastern cousins could attest, amounted to much the same thing. Nevertheless, such a sacrifice was required if Athaulf had any hope of his people negotiating the political terrain after his death. The experiment with an alternative and rival imperial court was officially over. In Athaulf's view, his followers' only option now was to acclimatize themselves to the servitude of Ravenna.

His own imminent death and the return of Placidia would at least offer some chance of good terms.

It is also possible that Athaulf had some inkling of the political chaos that would emerge after his death and sought to protect Placidia.[399] This notion, however, is far less likely as Athaulf seems to have intended his brother to succeed him as "king" of his wandering forces. Olympiodorus' account suggests that the rise of Singeric and his faction came as a result of coup and conspiracy, subverting the Gothic line of succession.[400] While we may doubt the notion that any "hard" line of succession existed for a kingship so recently established, Athaulf does appear to have intended for his rule to remain within his family.[401] The coup of Singeric therefore probably came as a surprise to everyone in the days following Athaulf's death.

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[399] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 136.

[400] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

[401] Wolfram, following the "ethnogenesis" theory first developed by Reinhard Wenskus, sees Alaric as a member of a Gothic noble family known as the Balthi, whose claims to royal lineage predate the Gothic entry into the Roman Empire in 376. Through the kingship of Alaric, Athaulf, and the descendants of Theodoric I of Toulouse (the "younger Balths" in Wolfram), the Balthi aristocratic clan formed the *Traditionskern* for the emergence of a collective Visigothic ethnic identity among their ethnically diverse followers. In Wolfram's view, the succession of kingship after Athaulf was therefore clear: it should have remained among the Balthic noble family. See Wolfram, *Goths*, 143-171; Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 89-101, 145-149, 260-262. A footnote is not sufficient to debate the many technical problems with the theory of ethnogenesis, for which see, in particular, the collected articles in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Andrew Gillett (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002). Regarding the Wolfram's ideas of Balthic kingship among the followers of Alaric and Athaulf, however, it should be noted that his account derives from a decidedly uncritical approach to the work of the sixth-century Byzantine author Jordanes. Jordanes, whose depictions of fifth-century events is often demonstrably false, is the first source to mention Alaric's decent from a noble clan known as the Balthi and to identify his lineage as the basis of his support among his followers. See Jordanes, *Getica* 146-147, 158-163. His testimony on the "Balthic" origins of Alaric is therefore questionable, especially as such evidence does not appear in any fifth-century source. In fact, it seems to result from the author's attempt to plant the origins of the Visigothic Kingdom in some distant pre-Roman past, in much the same way as he does for the royal Amali family of contemporary Ostrogothic Italy. See Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 161. Recent research has suggested that the rise of barbarian "kingship" as an official position in the empire is a later phenomenon. See Gillett, "Was Ethnicity Politicized in the Earliest Medieval Kingdoms?", 85-121. If Alaric himself used the title, it was in lieu of a regular position in the Roman administration. Athaulf, who never seems to have held such a position, seems to have had the

We know little of Singeric's reign except that it was short and extremely bloody. His first move upon claiming Athaulf's position was to murder his predecessor's family. Olympiodorus tells us that he killed Athaulf's children by his first wife, going so far as to tear them from the arms of Bishop Sigesarus who had sought to protect them. He also forced Galla Placidia, along with other political prisoners, to march twelve miles before him outside Barcelona, a mode of triumph for Singeric and an act of humiliation for the Roman princess and Athaulf's supporters.[402] Athaulf's brother and chosen successor was probably also killed in Singeric's initial purge, as we hear nothing more of him in the primary sources. If as Orosius suggests, Attalus journeyed to Spain with Athaulf's followers, his attempt at flight and eventual capture probably also belong to this period.[403]

While Singeric's immediate purge of Athaulf's family, and presumably of his most ardent supporters, is sometimes linked to the death of Sarus, it is better seen as a practical though ruthless action against a popular regime. Some scholars have assumed that Singeric formed part of the small group that Sarus led to join Jovinus in 412. After Athaulf killed their leader, this hypothesis suggests, he took some of Sarus' followers into his own group.[404] Such a hypothesis, however, relies closely on the identification of Dubius' former master as Sarus, an unproven proposition as we have seen. In fact, no evidence suggests that Athaulf spared any of Sarus'

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best reason to assume such a title. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 202-206. We therefore have little reason to assume that royal succession was a somehow "fixed" phenomenon among Athaulf's followers in 415.

[402] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 26.1 = Müller-Dindorf 26.

[403] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 9. See above for discussion and the differing opinions in the primary and secondary literature.

[404] Burns, *Barbarians*, 256; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226.

followers on this occasion.[405] The small group of eighteen to twenty men that left imperial service to follow Sarus into exile, and then proceeded to fight a suicidal battle at his side against Athaulf's multitude, could only have represented his most loyal retainers. Athaulf could never have trusted such men or believed that they would one day serve him as loyally. This is especially true of Singeric, Sarus' own brother. The only logical conclusion is that Singeric was already among Athaulf's followers before the death of Sarus in 412. While his actions clearly suggest that he had no love for Athaulf, they therefore probably represent a calculated plan to seize the initiative and eradicate his formidable competition among Athaulf's family, particularly Athaulf's brother, rather than a desire to obtain vengeance for Sarus. We may also interpret Singeric's actions as a public display of his political agenda, one which would differ visibly from Athaulf's.

Orosius alone provides any indication of the politics behind the succession crisis of 415. Unfortunately, his account of these events is typically both simplified and strained to accommodate his thesis of imperial unity under Christian auspices. He reduces the political complexity of this period to the question of whether or not Athaulf's followers should make peace with the Romans. In ignoring both the circumstances and the internal politics at play in this crisis, his narrative presents a skewed perspective, while often maintaining relevant details.

For his desire to reach an agreement with Ravenna, Singeric receives a far more favorable treatment in Orosius' text than he does in Olympiodorus.[406] Orosius makes no mention of the coup that brought Singeric to power, the bloody purge of Athaulf's family, or the humiliation of Galla Placidia. Nevertheless, while Orosius whitewashes Singeric's rise and abuse of power,

[405] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17.

[406] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 9.

there is little reason to doubt Orosius' claim that he desired peace with the Romans. In fact, all of these actions support Orosius' assertion.

As we have seen, the regime of Athaulf and Placidia had remained a thorn in the side of Ravenna for the previous two years. Regardless of the couple's attempt at peaceful negotiations after the birth of their son, their union represented a real threat to Honorius' control over the western empire. The *Chronicon Paschale* informs us that, for this reason, when the news of Athaulf's death reached Constantinople on September 24, 415, it was celebrated with both chariot races and an imperial procession.[407] Singeric's actions in wiping out Athaulf's family served both to ruthlessly secure his throne, as well as to effectively advertise his plan to make peace with Ravenna. In the same way, his humiliation of Placidia served to demonstrate his political platform, signifying a complete break from the agenda formerly promoted under Athaulf.[408]

Contrary to Orosius' account, however, there is no reason to attribute Singeric's assassination to his pro-Ravenna sentiments. His actions upon taking power provide sufficient explanation for his fall. Olympiodorus tells us that Singeric ruled for a mere seven days, a testament to the obvious unpopularity of his regime and the collective outrage caused by his political purges. Nor do we need to accept Orosius' simplified explanation for the rise of Wallia, as a king "having been elected to [royal power] by the Goths to break the peace."[409] Wallia's initial desire to avoid

[407] *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 415.

[408] Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 88.

[409] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 10: *Deinde Vallia successit in regnum ad hoc electus a Gothis, ut pacem infringeret, ad hoc ordinatus a Deo, ut pacem confirmaret.*

peace with Ravenna is better understood as at least partially the rejection of a political course that Singeric had sullied with his harsh actions.

We know little about Wallia or the circumstances that brought him to heights of power. Prosper claims that he conducted a purge of his rivals upon his succession. This is probable, though as Prosper fails to mention the brief reign of Singeric, the statement may also result from a confusion of the two.[410] Nevertheless, it is difficult to see Wallia as anything other than a former supporter of Athaulf and Placidia's regime, chosen to right the wrongs of a political coup. Placidia, who had fallen into disgrace under Singeric's rule, seems to have returned to a position of respect under Wallia. Orosius tells us that the new king treated Placidia "honorably and decently" while she remained in his care.[411] Narratives of this period typically continue to treat Placidia as a captured princess.[412] As the widow of Athaulf, however, and the foundation for the legitimacy of their failed imperial regime, Placidia had been transformed from a captive to an active and respected regent in recent years.[413] We therefore must see her as a locus of power in Wallia's regime, as much a queen as a Roman princess, and fully capable of garnering her own support among her deceased husband's followers.

Wallia's concern for his former queen may also have informed his initial decision to avoid peace with Ravenna. Placidia's return would have to have formed the base term to any agreement with Honorius' forces. As we have seen, however, Placidia probably had no desire to

[410] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 415.

[411] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 12: *Placidiam imperatoris sororem honorifice apud se honesteque habitam fratri reddidit…*

[412] See, for example, Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 202-203; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 168-170; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 137-139; Heather, *Roman Empire*, 241; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 58-59.

[413] Oost suggests that though she was now a hostage once again, she received some consideration for her previous rank as queen. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 137-139.

return to Ravenna, even after the humiliation she was forced to endure under Singeric. From her perspective in 415, she could probably expect to enjoy greater safety, and vastly more freedom, among Athaulf's former supporters than she would as a prisoner in her brother's court.

Wallia therefore initially sought alternatives to negotiations with Ravenna. Orosius suggests that he may have briefly toyed with the idea of transporting his people by sea, possibly to Africa. His reflections on the failed crossing of a different Gothic army in the previous year, however, caused him to abandon the notion.[414] Wallia and followers therefore remained firmly entrenched in the province of Tarraconensis.[415]

In the meantime, Wallia's followers continued to suffer from the supply problems that had plagued them since 412. Even divided across the province, the land simply could not support such a large host. Constantius may also have moved his Narbonese blockade south to Barcelona, further aggravating the potential for famine among the wandering host.[416] Olympiodorus offers an anecdote that probably belongs to this period. He claims that Vandal profiteers exploited the

[414] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 11-12.

[415] Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 169. Confusion over this passage of Orosius has resulted in depictions of Wallia and his followers wandering into southern Spain and attempting to cross to Africa, only to fail in the endeavor. See, for example, Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 59; Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 202-203; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 138-139. Kulikowski shows that Orosius cannot support this notion. Halsall accepts Kulikowski's conclusions. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226.

[416] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 318; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226. The Gallic Chronicler of 452 also suggests that Constantine may have engaged Wallia militarily at this time. See *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 78: *Gothi, cum se iterum Athauulpho perempto mouissent, Constanti repelluntur occursu.* As the chronicler makes no mention of the move to Barcelona, however, the entry may simply be a garbled account of the Narbonese blockade of 414/415.

hunger of the Goths, selling them grain at the exorbitant rate of one solidus per scoop (*trulla*). This arrangement led to the Vandals' derisive name for the Goths as *Trulli*.[417]

Whatever concern Wallia may have had for Placidia, the needs of his people ultimately forced him to shed his initial hesitation and re-enter negotiations with the imperial court. Perhaps Placidia had also come to realize the hopelessness and dire consequences of continued resistance to Ravenna and agreed to the inevitable result. In any case, Olympiodorus tells us that negotiations were conducted through an *agens in rebus* named Euplutius. In exchange for six hundred *modii* of grain, Wallia returned Placidia to her brother's control.[418] In addition, Wallia offered hostages of the highest rank and agreed to campaign against the other barbarians of Spain under the imperial aegis.[419]

This act began a new phase in the hitherto tumultuous relationship between Ravenna and the followers of Athaulf and Alaric. The return of Placidia meant that Ravenna once again had control over the destiny of the western branch of the Theodosian dynasty. Wallia's concession of this significant advantage served to both simplify and solidify the relationship between his followers and the imperial seat. For the immediate future, Wallia's followers possessed had no viable course of action other than service to the dictates of Ravenna. As such, they embarked on

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[417] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 29.1 = Müller-Dindorf 29. For explanation, see Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 218, n. 62; Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 367, n. 87; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226. Wolfram, drawing on earlier Germanic philological scholarship, implausibly argues that with the name "Trulli", the Vandals were referring to the Goths as "trolls". See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 26-27. Gillett, however, conclusively dismisses this hypothesis, showing that Olympiodorus' τροῦλοι is simply a Greek transliteration of the Latin word *trulla* "scoop" or "spoon". See Andrew Gillett, "Introduction: Ethnicity, History, and Methodology", in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2002) 1-18.

[418] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 30 = Müller-Dindorf 31.

[419] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 12-13; Hydatius, *Chronicon* 52 [60].

the reconquest of the Spanish provinces as an imperial army. As previously suggested, Constantius may have already planned to use Athaulf's army for this purpose in 412. Wallia's campaigns, which would require most of the next two years, therefore signified the long-awaited, final phase of the reestablishment of Ravenna's authority over the western empire.

Chapter 5: Reconquest of Spain to Visigothic Settlement

Following the peace established in 415/416 and the surrender of Galla Placidia to Ravenna, Wallia's followers became a Roman army operating under the aegis of Ravenna. Constantius tasked his new auxiliaries with re-establishment of Honorian authority over the provinces of the Spanish diocese. For the next two years, Wallia's forces campaigned tirelessly against the Siling Vandals of Baetica and the Alans of Lusitania. With these administratively important provinces returned to Roman control in 418/419, Constantius then recalled Wallia and his forces from Spain and established them in the Gallic province of Aquitania Secunda. In doing so, Honorius' general inadvertently planted the seeds of what would eventually become a powerful political actor in the later fifth century, the Visigothic kingdom of Aquitaine. In the political crises of the subsequent decades, the Visigothic court at Toulouse would form a viable locus of regional power for Gallic aristocrats, shifting focus away from the imperial seat at Ravenna.

This chapter examines the historical events and scholarly debates that surround the integration of Wallia's followers into the political fabric of the Honorian regime. First, this chapter constructs a narrative of Wallia's Spanish campaigns on the basis of the *Chronicon* of Hydatius and the *Historiae* of Orosius. In keeping with the arguments of some scholars, it sees these campaigns as not launched against the Spanish barbarians *per se*, but as an attempt to restore a functioning Roman administration in the diocese.[420] This view directly affects our interpretation of the seemingly abrupt recall of Wallia's forces in 418, leaving the Vandals and Suebi in control of the province of Gallaecia. While maintaining the idea that this province was unnecessary to Constantius' goals in 418, this chapter nevertheless argues that some sort of Roman treaty with

[420] Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 170-173. Accepted by Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 229-230.

the barbarians of this province is plausible, even if not directly attested in the evidence. The chapter then turns to a discussion of the various theories surrounding the Roman political motivations for the Aquitanian settlement. After examining the main scholarly arguments, this chapter argues that the settlement was a response to immediate needs of restoring Honorian political authority to the Gallic landscape. It also argues that Galla Placidia's familial ties to the royal family of Theodoric, as well as her marriage to Constantius in 417, played a major role in bringing Theodoric's forces into political union with the Honorian regime. This new political alignment therefore justified Constantius' decision to settle Theodoric's forces in a formerly rebellious province. Finally, after a brief discussion of the prominent theories of barbarian settlement in the fifth century, this chapter argues that the nascent Aquitanian settlement was managed both with the usual billeting of troops on civilians, like any other late Roman army, but that it also included some instances of landed settlement. Ultimately, the settlement was an ad hoc affair, relying on the previous pattern of troop distribution established by Athaulf in 413/414.

As discussed in Chapter 2, in the spring or summer of 409, Constantine III's general Gerontius rebelled against him. In an effort to weaken his former master's regime, he stirred up the barbarians who had crossed the Rhine in 406 and had hitherto been confined to the northern Gallic provinces into open revolt once more.[421] Over the next few months, these groups of Alans,

[421] Zosimus, *Historia Nova* VI. 5. 2. Demougeot, "Constantine III", 200-204; Drinkwater, "Usurpers" 283-284; Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul", 337-339. See Chapter 2 for discussion of these events.

Vandals, and Suebi spread terror and destruction into the provinces of southern Gaul, before crossing the Pyrenees into Spain in the autumn of 409.[422]

The chronicler Hydatius describes in horrific detail both the devastation that these barbarian groups inflicted on the Spanish provinces and also the resulting famine and plague.[423] Such a state of affairs lasted just over a year before giving way to peace in 411. In this year, the groups of barbarians divided the Spanish provinces amongst themselves for settlement. The Vandals and the Suebi received the northwestern province of Gallaecia. The Siling Vandals took the southern province of Baetica. Finally, the largest group, the Alans, received the middle provinces of Lusitania and Carthaginiensis. Hydatius also tells us that after the division, "The Spaniards remaining from these misfortunes in the cities and forts make themselves subject to the servitude of the barbarians ruling in the provinces."[424] While the machinery of the imperial government continued to function during the pillaging of the previous year, probably under the auspices of the usurper Maximus, local authority seems to have passed into the hands of the barbarian

[422] Hydatius *Chronicon* 34 [42] specifies the dates of September 28 or October 12, 409, for the barbarians' entry into Spain.

[423] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 38 [46] – 40 [48]. Hydatius' account has led many scholars to envision the Spanish provinces as falling completely into political chaos during this period. See, for example, Bury, *Late Roman Spain*, 203; Courtois, *Vandales*, 52-53; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 108-109; Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 161-162. Muhlberger and Kulikowski, however, have shown that Hydatius' account derives from literary tropes of the apocalypse. Furthermore, Kulikowski also notes that Hydatius' reference to the "tyrannical tax-collector" (*tyrannicus exactor*) betrays the existence of a functioning Roman administration under the usurper Maximus. See Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 219; Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 161-165.

[424] Hydatius *Chronicon* 41 [49]: *Spani per ciuitates et castella residui a plagis barbarorum per prouincias dominantium se subiciunt seruituti.*

leaders after 411.[425] The reestablishment of the imperial authority of Honorius was contingent on his government's breaking the hold of barbarian groups operating in Spain.[426]

As with the events of the first half of the decade, Hydatius alone provides any real details on Wallia's Spanish campaigns from 416-418. Unfortunately, his statements are few and brief, in keeping with the strictures of the chronicle genre. Hydatius' narrative suggests that Wallia's campaigns focused on the largest, or perhaps merely the most powerful, of the four barbarian groups in Spain, the Siling Vandals and the Alans. If the order of Hydatius' entries is any indication, Wallia first seems to have marched against the Vandals of Baetica, either passing through or sailing around the province of Carthaginiensis. Wallia's forces were completely successful in this endeavor, virtually exterminating the Siling branch of the Vandals.[427]

Wallia next moved north and west into the province of Lusitania to take on the Alans. Earlier in his chronicle, Hydatius implies that the Alans comprised the largest contingent of Spanish barbarians. He lists the Alans first in his enumerations of the barbarian peoples who entered Spain in 409 and he tells us that they received the lion's share, the provinces of Lusitania and Carthaginiensis, in the barbarian division of Spain in 411.[428] Nevertheless, Wallia's campaign

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[425] Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 162-167.

[426] Several scholars have implausibly argued that the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi were established as federates of Ravenna before or just after the division of the Spanish provinces in 411. Courcelle suggests that the barbarians achieved some recognition as allies from Ravenna. Burns suggests that Gerontius settled the Alans, Vandals, and Suebi in Spain and that Honorius' general Constantius temporarily recognized the barbarians as federates from 412-416. Muhlberger, while noting the lack of evidence, at least suggests that the division of Spain may have involved the imperial court at Ravenna. See Courcelle, *Histoire littéraire*, 103; Burns, *Barbarians*, 254-255, 260-262; Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 219. Such notions, however, run contrary to Hydatius, who shows that the division was conducted amongst the barbarians themselves without reference to imperial authority. See Hydatius, *Chronicon* 41 [49]; Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 166; Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 105.

[427] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 59 [67]: *Vandali Silingi in Betica per Valliam regem omnes extincti*.

[428] Goffart has shown that the Hydatius' list of the Spanish barbarian peoples implies their relative strength in numbers. See Goffart, *Barbarian Tides*, 80-81. Hydatius, *Chronicon* 34 [42] describes the entry of Alans, Vandals,

against the Alans was as successful as his previous engagement with the Siling Vandals had been. The Alan king Addax was killed in the fighting. Those few Alan soldiers who survived abandoned their own claims to rule and placed themselves under the protection of Gunderic, the king of the Vandals of Gallaecia.[429] This action may have been responsible for the later designation of Vandal kings as *rex Vandalorum et Alanorum*, although the title, first attested in 484, probably owes more to the later political exigencies of the Vandal kingdom in Africa rather than the circumstances of 416-418.[430]

While providing some details for Wallia's campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula, Hydatius' chronicle nevertheless raises as many questions as it answers. First, though he clearly states that the Alans received both Lusitania and Carthaginiensis in the original barbarian division of Spain, he never mentions fighting in the latter province. Hydatius specifically claims that Wallia's campaigns took place in Lusitania and Baetica alone.[431] The omission of Carthageniniensis is

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and Suebi into Spain; 52 [60] Hydatius tells us that Wallia, upon making peace with Constantius, moves against the Alans and Siling Vandals. In his later, more detailed account, however, he reverses this order probably to reflect the actual course of the campaign, specifying that Wallia attacked the Siling Vandals first. Finally, in his narrative of the division of Spain (41 [49]), Hydatius changes this order once more, first listing the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia, before again maintaining the regular order of Alans and then Siling Vandals. The fact that Gallaecia was his native province, however, probably explains this irregularity.

[429] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 60 [68].

[430] If genuine, the first attested appearance of this title derives from the supposed copies of two edicts of King Huneric, dated 483 and 484, preserved in a late fifth-century source, Victor of Vita's *Historia Persecutionis Africanae Provinciae* II. 39 and III. 3-14. The title is also attested in the sixth century for Gelimer, the last Vandal king of Africa in both epigraphic and literary texts. See *CIL* 8: 17 412 and Procopius, *Wars* III. 24. 3. See Moorhead's note in *Victor of Vita: History of the Vandal Persecution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992) 37 n. 24. Bachrach claims that the Vandal kings had adopted this title in 419. Wolfram opts for a slightly later date, after the creation of the Vandal kingdom of Africa. See Bachrach, *History of the Alans*, 58; Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 169-170. As noted above, however, the only firm indication of this title comes from late fifth and early sixth century contexts. As Gillett has shown, the title *rex Vandalorum et Alanorum* is the earliest evidence for a western monarch's use of an ethnic title. Noting an ethnic inscription for a rival North African king, Gillett suggests that the Vandal title may have been the result of political conflict in the region. See Gillett, "Was Ethnicity Politicized?", 92-93, 108-110.

[431] See Hydatius, *Chronicon* 52 [61].

striking if we consider that an overland crossing of Wallia's forces en route to Baetica would have carried them through that supposedly Alan territory, and would have been likely to result in violence. This fact may therefore indicate that Constantius used Roman ships to ferry Wallia's forces south for seaborne invasion of Baetica. If, as Matthews and Halsall suggest, Constantius had already moved his fleet south from Narbonne to impose another blockade on Barcelona, then he would certainly have had the ready means for such an operation.[432] Furthermore, the faster sea route would have given Wallia's forces the element of surprise, providing some additional reason for the outstanding success that Wallia enjoyed when facing entrenched opponents. Finally, a southern origin for the campaigns makes some strategic sense if Constantius feared the possibility of a threat to the much more valuable African provinces.

Since the Diocletianic reforms of the late third century, the *vicarius Hispaniarum* had administered the African province of Mauretania Tingitana, just across the Strait of Gibraltar from Baetica, as one of the six provinces of the new Spanish diocese.[433] This restructuring was an astute recognition of the close economic, military, and administrative ties between Baetica and Tingitania, resulting from the ease of passage across the strait.[434] There is no evidence to suggest the Siling Vandals had taken advantage of this thoroughfare as of 416, or that they ever intended to do so. A successful attack from the north, however, had the potential to push these barbarians across the strait and into a previously untouched province. Given these considerations, Constantius may have decided that the best way to conduct the campaign was from a southern

[432] See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 318; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 226.

[433] This administrative division is noted in the early fourth-century list of provinces known as the *Laterculus Veronensis*. See T. D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) 202-203.

[434] Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 71-76.

point of origin. From a sea-port within the province of Baetica, Wallia's group could push the Vandals north towards the provincial capital of Córdoba (Corduba) and away from easy access to the ports of the strait.

After the destruction of the Siling Vandals, Wallia moved his forces against the Alans of Lusitania with similar success.[435] Again, however, Hydatius makes no mention of the Alans of Carthaginiensis. If the Alan king Addax had adopted the administrative structure of the province, he would probably have focused his defense on the diocesan capital of Mérida. He may therefore have recalled the Alans settled in the province of Carthaginiensis to Lusitania as part of his army. This collective group of Alans then suffered defeat at the hands of Wallia's forces.

Another possibility arises from the fact that we have no idea whether or not Addax was the king of all of the Alans or simply those in Lusitania. None of our sources suggest that the disparate barbarian groups in Spain worked together to face Wallia's onslaught. In fact, Orosius claims that they were actively hostile to one another.[436] In this scenario, Wallia's army could have defeated the Lusitanian Alans, while leaving those Alans settled in Carthaginiensis to their own devices. From the perspective of Ravenna, a group of Alans settled somewhere in the large and relatively unimportant province was hardly an issue provided they did not interfere with the functioning of the imperial administration.[437] The provincial capital of Carthaginiensis was Carthago Nova, a port city which imperial forces could retake through the use of a blockade. As long as Ravenna possessed control of the provincial capital, they could resume the governmental

[435] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 60 [68].

[436] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 14.

[437] Kulikowski suggests a similar solution to the question of why the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia were left in possession of the province in 418. See Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 171.

machinery of tax collection. In contrast, the provincial capitals of Baetica and Lusitania were located further inland and both provinces were important for other reasons. Baetica was strategically important for access to Tingitania, while Lusitania was administratively important for the diocesan capital at Mérida. It was therefore no coincidence that Wallia focused his campaigns to restore imperial control on these provinces.[438] From the imperial perspective, the residents of Carthaginiensis could afford to have some barbarian settlers in their midst.

This possible fate for the Alans of Carthaginiensis accords well with Hydatius' account of the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia. After his notice on the destruction of the Alans of Lusitania, the chronicler tells us that "the Goths…were recalled to Gaul by Constantius and accepted settlements in Aquitania from Toulouse right up to the ocean."[439] The Vandals and Suebi, along with the Alan survivors from Lusitania, were therefore left to continue their settlements in Gallaecia, safe for the moment from imperial reprisals.

Constantius' reason for leaving the Vandals and Suebi in control of the province of Gallaecia has long been a subject of scholarly debate. Ultimately, the question is unduly influenced with the benefit of hindsight. In 428/429 the Vandals of Gallaecia would take advantage of Roman political distraction and cross into Africa, ultimately dealing a devastating blow to the Western Roman Empire through the establishment of an African kingdom. In the context of 418, however, such eventualities were unforeseeable and arguably unimaginable. Nevertheless, the question and the debate in general offer valuable insights for Constantius' goals during this period and are therefore worth considering.

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[438] For the Roman administrative goals of Wallia's campaigns, see Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 170-171.

[439] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 61 [69]: *Gothi… per Constantium ad Gallias reuocati sedes in Aquitanica a Tolosa usque ad Oceanum acceperunt.*

Scholars have offered three plausible solutions for Constantius' decision to leave the Vandals and Suebi in control of Gallaecia. The first solution approaches the problem from the perspective of the imperial administration. The second suggests that one or both of the barbarian groups in Gallaecia, like Wallia's followers, managed to secure their own agreements with the Honorian regime. A third option, which ties the withdrawal of Wallia's forces from Spain in 418 to events in Gaul, will be examined in the context of the debate surrounding the Aquitanian settlement.

Kulikowski has approached the problem from the perspective of the imperial administration during this period. In his view, Constantius' ultimate goal for Wallia's campaigns was the re-imposition of a functioning imperial administration in the Spanish diocese, particularly for the purpose of taxation. Wallia and his forces had fought and secured the most vital provinces, Baetica and Lusitania, for exactly this purpose. Gallaecia, on the other hand, was located in the mountainous northwest region of the Iberian peninsula, far from its main administrative centers. From Ravenna's perspective, the province was therefore of negligible importance to the immediate needs of the imperial administration. Furthermore, the Vandals and the Suebi were the weakest of the barbarian groups who had settled in Spain in 409. Once time and situation permitted, imperial forces could easily deal with these barbarians.[440] For the moment, however, they were contained. Over time, they might even assimilate to Roman life.[441]

Kulikowski's explanation relies on a sober understanding of the workings of the imperial administration in this period, and offers the best approach to the campaigns of Wallia from 416-418. The seemingly abrupt recall of Wallia's forces in 418, which left the Vandals and Suebi in

[440] Kulikowski sees the *comes Hispaniarum* Asterius' campaign against the Vandals in 420 as a continuation of Wallia's efforts. See Michael Kulikowski, "The Career of the 'Comes Hispaniarum' Asterius", *Phoenix* 54:1/2 (2000) 123-141; Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 172-173.

[441] Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 170-171.

control of Gallaecia and possibly also some Alan settlements in Carthaginiensis, is therefore only a puzzle to modern scholars who interpret the objective of Wallia's campaigns as completely ridding the Spanish peninsula of barbarians. If, however, the objective was simply to restore a functioning administration in the diocese for the purpose of collecting tax revenues, then the problem disappears. Wallia's campaigns in Baetica and Lusitania had returned the two most vital provinces to Roman control. The province of Gallaecia, by contrast, was both distant and insignificant to this objective. Constantius' decision to leave the Vandals and Suebi in control of Gallaecia for the time being therefore makes sense from the perspective of the imperial administration. As such, Kulikowski's thesis has received the support of scholars such as Halsall.[442]

There is, however, a more speculative solution to the problem, often raised in older scholarship, and recently revived by Gillett, which suggests that the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia managed to obtain their own treaties with Ravenna during the course of Wallia's campaigns.[443] J. B. Bury first proposed this possibility in 1923, based on the testimony of Orosius and the fact that, as we have seen, Hydatius records no campaigns against these groups.[444] Orosius, writing during the course of Wallia's campaigns in 417, tells us that various kings of the barbarian peoples occupying Spain at least sought to establish some type of peace

[442] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 229-230.

[443] Andrew Gillett, "The Birth of Ricimer", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 44:3 (1995) 380-384. For other scholarly assumptions of alliance with the Gallaecian barbarians, see Stein, *Histoire*, I. 267, who assumes an imperial alliance with at least the Suebi, on the basis of Hydatius' account of the campaigns of Asterius in 420; Schmidt, *Die Ostgermanen*, 461-462 who assumes a treaty with both the Vandals and Suebi; and Bachrach, *History of the Alans*, 56-57, who reaches similar conclusions for the Vandals, though his account is severely marred by an incautious use of later, spurious sources for the fifth-century such as Isidore of Seville.

[444] Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 204 n. 1.

with Honorius. In the meantime, they had proceeded to fight amongst themselves.[445] Orosius therefore presents a chaotic image of the wars amongst the barbarians in Spain, with general fighting on all sides. As such, his testimony bears little relation to Hydatius' careful itinerary of Wallia's campaigns. As a final word to the state of affairs in Spain, Orosius adds that trustworthy messengers daily inform him of the battles and slaughter taking place among the barbarians, and especially that "Wallia, king of the Goths, strives to achieve peace."[446]

Bury's theory is plausible, though as we have seen, Orosius' biblical rhetoric and overarching thesis often compromise his presentation of events and thus his value as a contemporary historical source. In the present case, the author balances the notice of the chaotic wars of the barbarians in Spain with the overall benefit these wars provide for the Roman state as a whole. Orosius' final notice on Wallia's pursuit of peace may simply have resulted from a desire to end his work on an optimistic note in keeping with the overall theme of his narrative.

Nevertheless, later evidence suggests that Orosius' statement on Wallia's activities may have some basis in reality. Andrew Gillett, drawing on the evidence of Sidonius Apollinaris, has recently revived Bury's thesis. Sidonius, in his panegyrics for the Emperors Majorian and Anthemius, delivered respectively in 458 and 468, has frequent cause to praise the exploits and heritage of the patrician and *magister utriusque militiae* (MVM) Ricimer. Ricimer was the most successful late antique statesman and king-maker after the end of the Theodosian Dynasty in the west.[447] He was also the grandson of Wallia, who seems to have married his daughter to a prince

[445] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 13-14.

[446] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 15: …*Valliam Gothorum regem insistere patrandae paci…*

[447] *PLRE* II: Flavius Ricimer 2

of the Suebian royal house.[448] As Wallia died shortly after the establishment of the Aquitanian settlement in 418/419, he could only have negotiated this marriage during his tenure in Spain. This fact seems to suggest that while campaigning for the Romans, Wallia was also engaged in forming his own treaties with the other barbarian peoples in Spain. Gillett assumes that Wallia's marriage alliance could only have occurred if the Suebi of Gallaecia had also been allied with Ravenna. He therefore concludes that the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia had entered into some agreement with the imperial court by 418.[449]

As with Bury's conclusion, however, there are problems with Gillett's argument, even beyond the lack of evidence for treaty relations between Ravenna and the Vandals and Suebi. Primarily, there is no reason to think that Wallia's marriage alliance with the Suebian royal house necessarily indicates that the Suebi had also reached an agreement with Ravenna. It is, in fact, entirely possible to view the recall of Wallia's forces to Gaul as a result of his "unauthorized" peace overtures. Constantius could easily have interpreted Wallia's marriage alliance with the Suebi, an enemy of the state, as a dangerously independent action on the part of an allied Roman official.

Nevertheless, while there are problems with the theories of scholars such as Bury and Gillett which propose a treaty with one or both groups of barbarian settlers in Spain, the idea itself is not beyond the realm of possibility, nor is it in complete discord with Kulikowski's argument for an

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[448] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmen* II. 360-365. Sidonius also generally alludes to Ricimer's royal heritage in *Carmen* II. 485-486 and *Carmen* V. 266-268.

[449] Andrew Gillett, "The Birth of Ricimer", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 44:3 (1995) 380-384. For other scholarly assumptions of alliance with the Gallaecian barbarians, see Stein, *Histoire*, I. 267, who assumes an imperial alliance with at least the Suebi, on the basis of Hydatius' account of the campaigns of Asterius in 420; Schmidt, *Die Ostgermanen*, 461-462 who assumes a treaty with both the Vandals and Suebi; and Bachrach, *History of the Alans*, 56-57, who reaches similar conclusions for the Vandals, though his account is severely marred by an incautious use of later sources for the fifth century such as Isidore of Seville.

administrative solution. As we have seen, there is little reason to suspect that the eradication of the Vandals and Suebi and the incorporation of Gallaecia were high on Constantius' agenda in 418. It is therefore entirely possible that while intending to revisit the question at a later date, Constantius confirmed peace with one or both of these groups or simply forced them to recognize Roman authority. With or without battle or an elaborate treaty, such practices were part and parcel of diplomatic policy on the Rhine/Danube frontier, and would make sense given the circumstances.[450] Nevertheless, without positive source evidence, such assumptions must remain hypothetical, and Kulikowski's solution offers the best approach to the evidence.

Some scholars have suggested a third possible solution to the problem of the ostensibly abrupt recall of Wallia's forces from Spain, suggesting that the action was a response to the immediate needs of the Honorian administration in the Gallic provinces. In examining this solution, we must inevitably turn to the controversial topic of Constantius' settlement of Wallia's followers in the province of Aquitania. Unfortunately, as with the Spanish campaigns, the evidence is sorely lacking for both Ravenna's political objectives as well as the mechanisms behind this settlement. After examining the primary sources evidence, we will review the hypotheses of various scholars concerning the purpose of this settlement for the Honorian administration.

In 418, Wallia had just spent two years conquering the Iberian peninsula, removing all possible threats to the re-imposition of Roman rule. The sources provide no indication as to the desires of Wallia and his followers, though it is reasonable to assume that these included regular access to supplies and some type of settlement. Problems of supply had plagued their group at least since Athaulf's negotiations of 412, and the alleviation of this perpetual hunger remains the

[450] See Elton, *Warfare*, 182-184, for Roman displays of strength with or without battle.

only visible gain of their peace negotiations with Constantius in late 415/416.[451] Though no source specifies the demand, we may reasonably assume that settlement was also a common desire of Wallia's people through both reference to previous negotiations and treaties, as well as consideration of the wayward migrations of Wallia's own followers for the last eight years. The obscure treaty of 382 seems to have included settlement for those barbarians willing to make peace with the imperial government.[452] Lands for settlement had also formed a basic point in the negotiations between Alaric and the court of Honorius from 408-410.[453] The followers of Wallia and Athaulf had themselves attempted to settle at least twice on imperial lands, at Narbonne in late 413/414 and Barcelona in 415. On each occasion, Constantius had forced them to disperse and move on to new areas.[454] By 418, however, Wallia and his followers had just completed two years of rigorous fighting for the imperial cause. If supplies and land were what they wanted, Constantius was apparently more than willing to oblige his new auxiliaries.

Unfortunately, the sources provide few details concerning the settlement that grew from the negotiations between Constantius and Wallia. Our closest contemporary source, Philostorgius, almost certainly drawing on the earlier testimony of Olympiodorus, claims that Wallia and his followers received part of Gaul for farming.[455] The author also suggests that the settlement was established as part of the negotiations between Constantius and Wallia in 416. Two western chronicles provide further contemporary evidence. In his entry for the year 419, Prosper of

[451] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 30 = Müller-Dindorf 31.

[452] Themistius, *Oratio* 16 and 34; *Panegyrici Latini* II. 32. 3-4.

[453] Zosimus, *Historia Nova* V. 48. 3.

[454] Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 91.

[455] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 4: …μοῖράν τινα τῆς τῶν Γαλατῶν χώρας εἰς γεωργίαν… For Philostorgius' connection to Olympiodorus, see Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, I. 28-29.

Aquitaine tells us that "Constantius, the *patricius*, confirms peace with Wallia after Aquitania Secunda had been given to him for settlement along with certain cities of the bordering provinces."[456] Finally, as we have seen, Hydatius provides a comparatively late testimony, stating in an entry for the year 418 that Wallia and his followers "were recalled to Gaul by Constantius and accepted settlements in Aquitania from Toulouse right up to the ocean."[457]

The differing years that the sources offer for the settlement are not completely at odds. The fact that Philostorgius relates nothing of the Spanish campaigns may suggest that either he or his likely source, Olympiodorus, telescoped the events and complex negotiations of the years 416-418 into a single treaty.[458] The works of both authors are fragmentary, however, and for this reason it is difficult to argue for what they may or may not have included in their original texts. Nevertheless, Philostorgius' date of 416 for the settlement has some merit if we read his testimony loosely to suggest that Constantius offered some possibility for eventual settlement during his initial negotiations with Wallia.[459] This would certainly explain the vigor with which Wallia and his followers undertook the Spanish campaigns of the following years as well as the loyalty they seem to have shown the imperial government when they abandoned their successful conquests and returned to Gaul upon Constantius' command.

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[456] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 419: *Constantius patricius pacem firmat cum Wallia data ei ad inhabitandum secunda Aquitanica et quibusdam civitatibus confinium provinciarum.*

[457] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 61 [69].

[458] For this possibility, see Burns, "Settlement of 418", 60-61; Burns, *Barbarians*, 271; Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 26.

[459] As argued by Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 91.

In a similar fashion, the dates that Hydatius and Prosper provide, 418 and 419 respectively, are not so different that they require detailed argument in favor of one or the other.[460] If pressed, Prosper's Gallic origin and temporal proximity to the event clearly offer more support to the 419 date for the Aquitanian settlement.[461] Nevertheless, the chronicle genre allowed authors to group related events by theme, sometimes spanning more than a single year.[462] Hydatius, writing from the Spanish perspective, links the end of Wallia's campaigns in 418 with the Aquitanian settlement. As we have seen, Orosius, whose final lines were composed in 418, also alludes to Wallia's attempts to make peace in this year, suggesting that the wars were coming to a close.[463] We may therefore interpret Hydatius' testimony as simply a confirmation of the end of the Spanish campaigns in 418, while his statement on the recall and settlement of Wallia's troops may belong to a later year. Prosper, who does not mention the Spanish campaigns, has no reason to link the two events in his chronicle and fails to see the relationship. At the very least, we may note that the movement of Wallia's troops from Baetica to Aquitania probably required months of preparation that spanned the years 418 to 419.[464] There is therefore little reason to see a direct contradiction in the sources concerning the date of the settlement.

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[460] Schwarcz has recently argued for a redating of Hydatius' testimony for the establishment of the settlement from 418 to 419, thereby bringing the date into concord with Prosper. While offering some interesting points, his argument largely relies on Mommsen's edition of the text, neglecting the arguments of Burgess for Hydatius' chronological systems. See Andreas Schwarcz, "The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitania: Chronology and Archaeology", in *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001) 15-25; Burgess, *Chronicle of Hydatius*, 39-46. For a brief note on this problem, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 228 n. 43.

[461] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 228.

[462] Muhlberger identifies this as a feature of the chronicle genre which Prosper, the Gallic Chronicler of 452, and Hydatius inherited from their base text, the *Chronicle* of Jerome. See Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 151.

[463] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 43. 15.

[464] As suggested by Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 228-230.

Unfortunately, little else about the Aquitanian settlement is so easily explained. As we have seen, the few sources we possess offer brief and generalized information, providing no details concerning imperial motives for the settlement and few clues as to the means by which it was established on Gallic soil. This lack of information has encouraged a wide range of speculation and remains a highly contested topic in scholarly literature.

Two points unite the most recent approaches to the imperially authorized settlement of Wallia and his followers in 418/419. First, the Honorian regime instituted this program from a position of dominance. Constantius was in no way forced to settle Wallia's followers in Aquitania. The situation was not the result of some compromise in consideration of the overwhelming strength of Wallia's followers, or a case of Rome bowing to the inevitable pressures of the "barbarian migrations".[465] Since 412, Constantius had proven that he could skillfully control the movements of these peoples, forcing them to come to terms with the imperial will through manipulation of logistics alone.[466] As we have seen, after the return of Galla Placidia in late 415/416, Wallia had little choice but to follow imperial dictates. By 418, the Gothic king had apparently learned this lesson well enough to abandon his recent, hard-won conquests and humbly march his people towards Gaul when commanded to do so. For this reason, we must see the Aquitanian settlement as fulfilling some need for the imperial state and work to determine what that need was.

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[465] See, for example, E. A. Thompson, "The Settlement of the Barbarians in Southern Gaul", *Journal of Roman Studies* 46 (1956) 65-75; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, "Gothia and Romania", in *The Long-Haired Kings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982; reprint of original publication by Methuen and Company Ltd., 1962) 25-29; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 173-174; Vincent Burns, "The Visigothic Settlement in Aquitania: Imperial Motives", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 41:3 (1992) 362-373; Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 26-38; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 229-234.

[466] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 32-33.

A second generally agreed upon point is that later Visigothic Kingdom of Toulouse did not spring up fully grown from the Aquitanian settlement of Wallia and his followers in 418/419. This powerful entity emerged gradually and in response to specific imperial impetus or neglect.[467] Older historical narratives attempted to define this slow transformation as a Visigothic march towards independent sovereignty through treaty agreements with the Roman state.[468] More recent research suggests that Rome never recognized an independent state within the boundaries of the empire, and sees the emergence of a full-fledged and independent Visigothic kingdom only in the late fifth century, by which point the political power of the central government had declined to impotence.[469] Regardless, though debate still surrounds the specific relationship between the original settlement of 418/419 and its later incarnation as the Visigothic Kingdom of Toulouse, all seem to agree that this was a development that occurred in stages, extending over generations.

This collective agreement has led scholars in recent decades to focus on the Aquitanian settlement as a solution to the specific problems of the imperial government in 418/419. Unfortunately, our sources for this period are lamentably silent as to the nature of these problems, resulting in a variety of speculative, though more or less plausible interpretations. In articles appearing in 1956 and 1961 respectively, E. A. Thompson and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill

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[467] Kulikowski provides a good overview of this process. See Michael Kulikowski, “The Western Kingdoms,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*. ed. S. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

[468] See, for example, Schmidt, *Die Ostgermanen*, 461-462; Stein, *Histoire*, I. 267-268.

[469] Kulikowski, “The Western Kingdoms”. See also Peter Heather, “The Emergence of the Visigothic Kingdom”, in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 84-94; Andrew Gillett, "The Accession of Euric," *Francia* (Paris) 26/1 (1999) 1-40. Halsall sees the treaty of 439 as potentially establishing the independent sovereignty of the Gothic kingdom. He suggests, however, that this was the result of temporary weakness on the part of the empire and was not recognized as a permanent situation. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 246-247.

proposed that the Aquitanian settlement was established to defend Roman territory against specific threats. For Thompson, this threat was the mysterious Bacaudae whose activities are attested in the region of Armorica around the year 417.[470] For Wallace-Hadrill, it was Saxon pirates raiding the Atlantic coastline of Aquitania Secunda.[471] While creative, neither solution has stood the test of scholarly scrutiny. Thompson's theory concerning the Bacaudae is based on older interpretations of this group as social revolutionaries, peasants and slaves seeking to revolt against their masters and thus overturn the imperial status quo. More recent and convincing interpretations, however, depict the Bacaudae as local self-help groups, operating for the benefit of their regions, though outside imperial recognition.[472] Likewise, Wallace-Hadrill's solution fails because our sources show Saxon raids to have been a phenomenon of the 460's and 480's.[473] There is no evidence for such activity in the first two decades of the fifth-century.[474]

For these reasons, in a 1969 article, Bernard Bachrach disposed of Thompson and Wallace-Hadrill's suggestions of one specific threat and instead suggests that Constantius intended the Aquitanian settlement as one part of an interregional, barbarian "balance of power" in Gaul and

[470] Thompson, "The Settlement of the Barbarians", 65-75. Thompson generally assumed that the Aquitanian settlement consisted of land grants to barbarian settlers taken from aristocratic estates. The fact that we have no evidence of aristocratic outcry against the imperial government over the loss of their land (a motivating feature of debate over the mechanisms of barbarian settlement), led him to assume that the aristocrats in question saw the benefits of the endeavor. The fear of a spreading peasant rebellion provided the solution to this conundrum.

[471] Wallace-Hadrill, "Gothia and Romania", 25-29.

[472] For this interpretation of the Bacaudae, see Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 25-56.

[473] The first mention of a Saxon force in Gaul occurs in a confused section in Gregory of Tours' *Historia* concerning the Battle of Orleans c. 463. See, Gregory of Tours, *Historia*, II. 18. The first solid mention of the threat of Saxon pirates to the region of Aquitania actually occurs twenty years later, in a letter of Sidonius Apollinaris dated to c. 480. See Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistula* VIII. 6.

[474] Wallace-Hadrill was himself aware of the lack of evidence for his thesis. He therefore softens his argument, offering the solution of Saxon pirates as an addendum to Thompson's perceived threat of the Bacaudae. See Wallace-Hadrill, "Gothia and Romania", 25-29.

Spain.[475] The MVM could draw auxiliaries from each of these groups or set them against one another should any one settlement prove a threat to Roman supremacy in the future. There are two main problems with Bachrach's thesis. As we have seen, while the idea that Constantius made some sort of peace with the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia is plausible, the evidence is sorely lacking. It is therefore difficult to construct a thesis on such a flimsy basis. Second, Bachrach's theory that Constantius wished to construct a barbarian "balance of power", while not rejecting the dominant position of the imperial court in this endeavor, nevertheless suggests that Constantius was forced to deal with an insolvable barbarian problem. Such a notion is improbable. Wallia's troops had proven their loyalty to Ravenna during their Spanish campaigns, and the Vandals and Suebi were safely restricted in the distant province of Gallaecia with no access to Gaul. Bachrach's thesis therefore fails to properly account for the strength of the imperial government in 418 and the weakness of the barbarian groups settled in the Roman provinces. Nevertheless, his thesis has gained some support from scholars such as T. S. Burns.[476]

In a 1992 article, Vincent Burns opened up a more promising approach with his suggestion that we should see the Aquitanian settlement as part of Constantius' reconstitution of imperial authority in Gaul, rather than a response to a specific problem.[477] In Burns' scenario, Wallia's forces were meant as a general defense of the region in lieu of a regular Roman army. Constantius could use the "Goths" to deal with any threats to imperial authority that should arise, whether from usurpers, barbarians, or Bacaudae. Nevertheless, Burns inadvertently weakens his

[475] Bernard S. Bachrach, "Another Look at the Barbarian Settlement in Southern Gaul", *Traditio* 25 (1969) 354-358. Bachrach seems to have constructed his argument on the theories of Schmitt, who suggested that each of these three groups were allies of the imperial government. As such, Ravenna could draw auxiliaries from these groups or set them against one another should the need arise. See Schmidt, *Die Ostgermanen*, 461-462.

[476] Burns, "Settlement of 418", 55-56.

[477] Burns, "Visigothic Settlement", 362-373.

thesis for close cooperation between the imperial government and the Aquitanian settlement by suggesting that these barbarians continued to represent an active threat to the imperial agenda. He argues that Wallia's followers were settled in Aquitania Secunda due to the relative seclusion of the province. They were therefore prevented from threatening the Mediterranean coastal cities which formed the center of Roman strength. While offering an initially convincing approach, Burns' argument founders on this point. Aquitania Secunda was in no way remote from the other provinces of Gaul and it is unlikely that Constantius viewed Wallia's followers as a threat to his political agenda. Both of these points, however, are rectified in a 2001 article by Kulikowski.

Kulikowski begins from the same assumption that the Aquitanian settlement represented part of Constantius' plans for the reconstitution of Ravenna's authority in Gaul. Unlike Burns, however, Kulikowski takes a nuanced view of the political situation in 418, drawing on the history of Gallic usurpations in previous years. He therefore ties the Aquitanian settlement of Wallia's followers to the reestablishment of the *Concilium Septem Provinciarum* at Arles, as the imperial government's two-pronged method for addressing Gallic discontent. This council allowed the landowners and aristocrats of southern Gaul to present and debate their concerns under imperial auspices. The settlement of an army closely allied to the imperial government, however, was an overt threat to remove any thought of future usurpation.[478]

Kulikowski assesses the political atmosphere of the early fifth century, and undermines notions of political action based on a strict "Roman"/"barbarian" dichotomy. Kulikowksi's thesis that the Aquitanian settlement was established to support the Honorian regime against Gallic rebellion is therefore thoroughly convincing. A secondary thesis of the article, however, requires

[478] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 32-33.

some consideration. Kulikowski postulates that Constantius chose Aquitania Secunda as the site for the settlement of Wallia's followers because that province's inhabitants had shown no active support for the regimes of Constantine III or Jovinus. This prevented discontented Gallic notables from using Wallia's forces for their own ends.[479]

Halsall, however, has criticized Kulikowski's suggestion, noting not only the fact that our sources provide little evidence of the extent of Constantine or Jovinus' support network, but also the more solid detail that the only known member of Attalus' Narbonese regime was Paulinus of Pella, a Gallic aristocrat from Aquitania Secunda.[480] As we have seen, there is every reason to assume that the notables of at least the towns of Narbonne, Toulouse, and Bordeaux, if not the entire region, were complicit in Athaulf and Placidia's separatist regime. Constantius, in effect, settled Wallia and his followers in a province where they had previously known success in encouraging local aristocrats to break their loyalties to Ravenna. Ostensibly, such a plan courted disaster. The only conclusion is that the circumstances had changed considerably since the departure of Athaulf and Placidia in 414/415, in terms of both the political atmosphere of the region and Constantius' own relationship with Wallia and his followers. The main component in this change may have regarded the status of Galla Placidia herself.

Since his first appearance in the sources during the events of 410, Constantius had deftly climbed the ranks of imperial power. He had earned his first consulship in 414 after destroying the regimes of Constantine III, Jovinus, and Heraclianus.[481] He was named *patricius* possibly as

[479] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 33-34.

[480] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 230-231.

[481] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 23 = Müller-Dindorf 23.

early as 415, but certainly by March of 416.[482] Then, on January 1, 417, while Wallia was fighting his campaigns under imperial auspices in Spain, Constantius entered his second consulship alongside the Emperor Honorius. On this occasion, Honorius substantially increased the honors shown to his patrician by offering him a true pathway to imperial power through marriage to his sister, Galla Placidia.[483]

We know nothing of Placidia's life in the year between her surrender in late 415/416 and her marriage to Constantius. Olympiodorus' account of the latter event suggests that she was present in Rome when Honorius and Constantius took up their consulships. She may therefore have resumed her residence in this city. Olympiodorus also mentions that Constantius had grown angry with certain of Placidia's attendants due to her rejection of his romantic overtures.[484] This statement suggests that Placidia in 416 possessed a group of individuals who were sufficiently independent-minded to thwart the plans of the most powerful man in the western empire. While court factions had always played a large role in the political life of the empire, Olympiodorus' identification of these individuals as "attendants" or "servants" (θεράποντες) suggests that they were not court officials. The only probable conclusion is that they were part of a group that accompanied Placidia from Spain to Rome in 416.

A later fragment of Olympiodorus seems to confirm this. Olympiodorus tells us that after the death of Constantius, Honorius and Placidia shared a close relationship that came to border on

[482] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 415 refers to Constantius as *patricius*; *Codex Theodosianus* XV 14. 14 confirms the dignity in 416. The term *patricius* in late antiquity originally designated an honorary rank or dignity that could be awarded to several men at the same time. During the course of the fifth century, however, the term also came to refer to the office of the dominant military general in the western empire. See T. D. Barnes, "'Patricii' under Valentinian III", *Phoenix* 29.2 (1975), 155-170.

[483] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33 = Müller-Dindorf 34..

[484] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

the scandalous. Placidia's advisors, however, acted to turn this love into hatred. By the time of Placidia's exile in 422, the discord between the siblings had led to occasions of outright violence because Placidia maintained a large body of loyal barbarians from her marriages to Athaulf and Constantius.[485] Though discussing the events of 422, Olympiodorus' mention of Athaulf in this fragment suggests that Placidia probably already possessed a small train of barbarian protectors and advisors in 416. These may have constituted some of the "attendants" who actively encouraged her to reject the marriage proposals of Constantius.[486]

The presence of men and women in Rome loyal to Placidia as Athaulf's queen may in turn shed some light on Wallia and Constantius' negotiations in late 415/416 as well as Placidia's status for the interim year before her marriage to Constantius in 417. Wallia bowed to the inevitable in late 415/416 and negotiated a peace with Ravenna. As we have seen, however, there is good reason to view Wallia as a strong supporter of Athaulf and Placidia's regime who returned equilibrium to his people's political affairs after a period of unexpected chaos. The assassination of Athaulf and coup of Singeric had led to the politically motivated bloodbath of Athaulf's family as well as the degradation of Placidia herself. Upon taking the throne, Wallia immediately returned Placidia to her former honorable status.[487] He also initially sought alternatives to peace with Ravenna, which would have required him to turn over Placidia as the base term of any agreement.[488]

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[485] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

[486] Sirago suggests that Honorius' forcing Placidia to marry Constantius was staged to maintain the loyalty of her Gothic host, who hated the general. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 271. Oost and Sivan also assume that a large body of barbarians accompanied Placidia to Ravenna. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 140-141; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 59.

[487] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.12.

[488] Orosius, *Historiae* VII.42.11-12.

After her marriage to Athaulf and their attempts to form a separate Roman regime, Placidia was in no position to expect kind treatment from her brother Honorius or his patrician. Though some sources suggest that Constantius had long planned to marry Placidia, this is best explained as authors' retrojection of the realities of 417 onto Constantius' earlier career.[489] There is no reason to think that Constantius' desire to marry Placidia was common knowledge in 415. Nor was the marriage itself a foregone conclusion even after she was surrendered to Roman control. According to Olympiodorus, Placidia resisted Constantius' proposals for almost a year, before the Emperor Honorius himself forced the union.[490] As we have seen, having successfully transformed herself into a locus of power as a Gothic queen among Athaulf's followers, Placidia could only have expected a bitter fate should she return to Roman control. Seclusion in women's quarters of the palace or a monastic establishment was the best she could have hoped for under the circumstance. The fact that she seems to have suffered no indignity suggests that when she and Wallia bowed to the inevitable and opened negotiations with Constantius, they included some terms for her later well being.

The contrast between her probable fate in 415 and Olympiodorus' depiction of her status in 417 is striking. Placidia was apparently unconfined, in possession of her own following, and confident enough in her own status to resist the advances of Constantius for almost a year. Constantius' desire to eventually marry Placidia and thereby solidify his hold over imperial power provides some explanation for the leniency that she seems to have experienced upon her return to Roman control. Such considerations, however, do not explain the fact that she was

[489] See for instance Jordanes, *Getica* 165; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX. 16. 2. Sozomen claims that Honorius agreed to the marriage as early as 410, following Constantius' defeat of Constantine III. Jordanes claims that Honorius agreed to the marriage in 415.

[490] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

apparently allowed her own, independent followers and possibly even a host of armed men for her protection.[491] Unlike some of our primary authors, this suggests that Placidia did not actually present herself as a captured Roman princess to her brother and his patrician. Rather, she embraced the status of her last few years as a Gothic queen, complete with her own attendants and bodyguard. The fact that such individuals were allowed to accompany her from Spain to Rome suggests that Wallia and Placidia negotiated conditions for her surrender in late 415/416 in order to ensure her safety. It is therefore possible to see Placidia, not simply as a returned Roman princess, but as a person of high value among Wallia and his followers.[492] As such, her surrender to Constantius, along with many other hostages of noble birth, may have played a key role in ensuring the adherence of Wallia and his followers to the peace treaty of 415/416.

Having glanced back at the circumstances of Galla Placidia's return to Italy and its political implications, we can now look again to the Aquitanian settlement of 418/419: the continued loyalty of Wallia and his followers to Galla Placidia as a former Gothic queen may offer some explanation for exactly why Constantius felt that he could authorize a barbarian settlement on Gallic soil. While the surrender of Placidia in 415/416 possibly ensured the loyalty of Wallia and his followers to imperial dictates, her marriage to Constantius on January 1, 417, however unwilling, represented a firm political union of imperial and barbarian interests.

This alliance was further strengthened by the rise of Theodoric as king in succession to Wallia sometime in 418. We unfortunately know nothing of the details surrounding these events. The chronicler Hydatius provides a notice for the death of Wallia just after his entry for the

[491] As previously discussed, Olympiodorus suggests that Placidia derived at least some armed retainers from her marriage to Athaulf. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

[492] Oost suggests that this may have played a role in drawing the followers that returned with Placidia to Ravenna. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 140.

Aquitanian settlement, suggesting that both took place in 418.[493] Wallia may therefore have died just before the settlement or in the process of moving his people into Gaul. We likewise know nothing of Theodoric's early history or what prompted his rise to kingship. The only visible feature that may have played a role in his election is the fact that he seems to have married into the family of Athaulf and Alaric.[494]

In his panegyric to the Emperor Avitus, delivered on January 1, 456, Sidonius Apollinaris recounts the new emperor's rise to power through the aid and encouragement of King Theodoric II. Theodoric II had himself only recently gained power after a coup against his elder brother Thorismund, who had taken up the kingship after the long reign of their father, Theodoric I. In highly rhetorical verse, Sidonius has Theodoric II convince Avitus to assume the vacant position of emperor by recounting not only his long history with Avitus, but also his desire to rectify the crime of his grandfather, who had captured Rome.[495] The reference is clearly to Alaric, yet there is no evidence to suggest that Theodoric I was Alaric's son, nor that Alaric had any male issue. The only probable solution is that Theodoric had married a daughter of Alaric, a union which had produced at least Theodoric II and probably his brothers.[496]

Concerning Alaric himself, his only known wife was the sister of Athaulf, a fact which illustrates the close relationship between the two men and may have partially provided the

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[493] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 62 [70].

[494] Heather rejects this possibility, though offers no explanation for doing so. The context, however, would suggest that he is arguing against Wolfram's idea of a dynastic Balthi dominance of the Gothic kingship. See Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 31-32. See also, Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 33.

[495] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmen* VII.504-508.

[496] Wolfram therefore sees Theodoric as the "progenitor of the 'younger Balthi'". See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 33; Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 147-148.

impetus for Athaulf's own rise to leadership after Alaric's death.[497] It is therefore probable that the wife of Theodoric I and mother of Theodoric II was in fact the offspring of the union of Alaric and the sister of Athaulf. In terms of extended family, she was therefore also the maternal niece of Athaulf and Placidia.

We do not know if Athaulf's sister survived her husband. Placidia, however, would certainly have known and had some relationship with Athaulf's niece from her time as his consort.[498] The fact that this niece was married to Theodoric, the new king of Athaulf and Wallia's followers, suggests that a strong familial connection was established between the imperial court and the barbarians of the new settlement of Aquitania Secunda in 418.

It is also possible that this connection played some role in the initial rise of Theodoric to the kingship. In a recent article, Kulikowski notes that Rome managed the barbarian settlements on Gallic soil in much the same way as they managed the barbarian kingdoms on the frontier.[499] One aspect of this "management" consisted of ensuring that only kings loyal to Roman interests rose to power in their respective regions. This objective was accomplished in a variety of ways, including the establishment of treaties with certain barbarian leaders over others, as well as the

[497] The name of Athaulf's sister goes unrecorded in the sources, though the relationship between Athaulf and Alaric is mentioned frequently in the sources. See the accounts of Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 40. 2; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 11. 4 = Müller-Dindorf 10; Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX. 8. 2; Zosimus, *Historia nova* V. 37. 1; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 410.

[498] A ninth century source, Agnellus of Ravenna, suggests that Placidia maintained ties with another niece through her marriage with Athaulf. Agnellus relates a story in which a niece of Placidia, named Singledia, receives a vision from St. Zacharius ordering her to have Placidia build a monastery in his honor. Agnellus records Placidia's dedicatory inscription and adds that Singledia herself was interred in the building. See Agnellus of Ravenna *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis* 41. In this passage, Agnellus refers to Placidia as Singledia's *amita*, her "father's sister". This is obviously incorrect, and suggests that Agnellus may have used the term in a more general sense. If we are willing to entertain the historical validity of such a late source for fifth century events, then the Gothic origin of Singledia's name suggests that she was yet another daughter of Alaric and the sister of Athaulf.

[499] Kulikowski, "The Western Kingdoms".

complex practice of gift-giving. In more overt cases, Rome might directly manipulate barbarian leadership succession through imposing or removing candidates as they saw fit.[500]

If we consider this past history of Roman "management" techniques as well as the sensitive Gallic region in which Constantius settled Wallia and Theodoric's followers in 418/419, then the possibility that Constantius made some efforts to ensure the succession of a candidate loyal to his dictates seems quite probable. In this situation, Constantius could have used the familial links between Placidia and Theodoric's wife to create a firm alliance between the two houses. If Wallia had remained loyal to Ravenna from 416-418 out of respect for the memory of Athaulf and Placidia's regime, Constantius could trust the loyalty of Theodoric due to both personal gratitude and strong familial bonds.[501]

From this perspective, both the location and politics behind the Aquitanian settlement of 418/419 make some sense. As previously discussed, Kulikowski is almost certainly correct in his thesis that the settlement represented a threat to the previously rebellious Gallic aristocracy.[502] Contrary to his secondary thesis, however, the Aquitanian settlement was not established in a hitherto loyal province. Gallic aristocrats of Aquitania Secunda and Narbonensis Prima had themselves only recently supported Attalus' second regime. The geographical placement would therefore suggest that Constantius intended the settlement as not only a threat, but a direct punishment for these previously rebellious provinces. As Kulikowski hypothesizes, it is certainly

[500] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 144-152; 208-210; Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe*,181-192. For examples of Roman manipulation of barbarian leadership, see *PLRE* I: Macrianus I, Fraomarius, and Vadomarius.

[501] Wolfram seems to assume that Placidia could still inspire loyalty as a former Gothic queen as late as her conflict with Aëtius in 433. He does not, however, discuss Placidia's relationship with the Visigoths in any detail. See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 175.

[502] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 32-33.

possible that the Aquitanian settlement on the one hand and the provincial capital of Arles on the other served to wedge the regions which had supported Constantine and Jovinus between two bastions of imperial power.[503] We cannot overlook, however, the looming threat the settlement also provided for Narbonensis Prima, nor the probable punishment Constantius leveled against Aquitania Secunda.

Constantius could afford to settle Theodoric's forces in this rebellious region because in 418/419, the political situation which had previously made Attalus' second regime a viable alternative to Ravenna no longer existed. Leadership over Athaulf's barbarian coalition had changed hands three times since their departure from Narbonne in late 415/416. Galla Placidia, whose Theodosian dynastic connection had provided the foundation of legitimacy to Attalus' regime, was now firmly entrenched in the political sphere of Ravenna. Finally, the rise of Theodoric and his marriage to Athaulf's niece brought the political aims of the barbarian settlers fully into line with the imperial court of Honorius, Constantius, and Placidia. Unlike Athaulf's motley forces in 414, Theodoric's barbarian coalition in 418 was clearly a seasoned imperial army who took their orders from Ravenna.[504] There was therefore little chance of southern Gallic aristocrats turning such forces to rebellion.

Perhaps even more than the political agenda, the mechanics behind the establishment of Wallia and Theodoric's followers on imperial soil, as well as the later settlements of barbarian groups such as the Burgundian, Alans, and Ostrogoths in the sixth century, remains a highly contested topic in scholarly literature.[505] On the most basic level, the debate concerns whether

[503] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 33-34.

[504] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 33-34.

[505] For a good overview of the historiography of the settlement debate, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 422-436.

the imperial government provided for the maintenance of these groups through the distribution of land for farming or through allotments of imperial taxation. The former option has some support in contemporary sources, while the latter provides an answer for the curious fact that we have no fifth-century evidence for large scale land confiscations. Historiography has seen the rise of two principal models for barbarian settlement in the fifth and sixth centuries based on these assumptions. Theodor Gaupp provided a model for the land allotment option in the mid-nineteenth century, drawing on the similarities in the fractional division of property into in both the Theodosian Code (concerning the billeting of Roman soldiers) and the later Visigothic and Burgundian Codes (concerning the division of lands).[506] Walter Goffart, on the other hand, devised the model for tax allotment in 1980, after an exhaustive reevaluation of Theodoric the Great's sixth-century measures for the maintenance of his troops in Italy.[507] Goffart's study largely destroys the basis of Gaupp's model, noting that Roman legislation assigning "thirds" (*tertia*) or "lots" (*sortes*) of civilian property to billeted Roman soldiers had nothing to do with the permanent division of land or property, but rather the temporary use of shelter.[508] We therefore cannot read these Roman laws as the basis for the permanent settlement of barbarians on Roman soil.

Instead, drawing on sixth-century evidence for the maintenance of Ostrogothic troops and the fact that we have no evidence for aristocratic resistance to the seizure of property, Goffart argued that the *tertia* and *sortes* of the later barbarian law codes were references to the distribution of

[506] Ernst Theodor Gaupp, *Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landtheilungen in den Provinzen des römischen Westreiches, in ihrer völkerrechtlichen Eigenthümlichkeit und mit Rücksicht auf verwandte Erscheinungen der alten Welt und des späteren Mittelalters* (Breslau: J. Max, 1844).

[507] Walter Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418-584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For minor revisions of his original thesis, see Goffart, *Barbarian Migrations*, 119-186.

[508] Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, 40-55.

imperial taxation. Such taxation was already filling the imperial coffers. In Goffart's model, these tax proceeds were simply redirected to barbarian leaders and their troops to provide for their maintenance. The lack of outcry over the burden of barbarian settlement therefore derives from the fact that individual Roman landowners lost nothing in this process. They simply paid to an imperial official or directly to barbarian "settlers" what they were already required to pay to the imperial government.[509]

While it does seem to solve the very large problem of aristocratic silence over the kind of land confiscations that Gaupp envisaged, Goffart's model has received a wide variety of supporters and critics.[510] The main problem is that there is little source evidence for the settlement of barbarians outside sixth-century Italy, and there is little reason to assume that all of the barbarian settlements were established using the same methods.[511] Furthermore, what source material exists for settlements outside Italy does often seem to refer to the distribution of land rather than taxes.[512] Accepting Goffart's thesis therefore requires a forced reading of many of our sources as

[509] Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans*, 51-55.

[510] Supporters: Wolfram, *Roman Empire*, 222-231; Jean Durliat, "Cité, impôt et integration des barbares", in *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Brill: New York and London, 1997) 153-179. Critics: Maria Cesa, "Hospitalità o altro 'techniques of accommodation'? A proposito di un libro recente", *Archivio Storico Italiano* 140 (1982) 539-552; S. J. B. Barnish, "Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement in the Western Empire", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 54 (1986) 120-155; Ian Wood, "Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis of the Burgundians", in *Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Berichte des Symposions der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung, 27. bis 30. Oktober, 1986, Stift Zwettl, Niederösterreich* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990) 53-69; Nixon, "Visigoths and Romans", 64-74.

[511] The current trend in scholarship suggests a variety of ad hoc measures for settlement. See Nixon, "Visigoths and Romans", 70-73; Chris Wickham, *Framing the early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 84-87; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 436-438.

[512] See, for example, Barnish, "Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement", 120-155, argues that Odovacer and Theodoric used some land division; Wood, "Ethnicity and the Ethnogenesis", 120-155 notes that the evidence of the Burgundian law code also suggests land division. Nixon argues for settlement on *agri deserti* in Gaul. Nixon, "Visigoths and Romans", 70-73.

well as the unlikely assumption of a universal vocabulary for the economic techniques of settlement.[513] Under the weight of these problems and others, the attempt to identify a universal program for the establishment of barbarian settlements within the Roman Empire seems to have stalled in recent years. For this reason, it seems best to deal with the individual barbarian settlements of the fifth century on a case by case basis.

As we have seen, Athaulf had successfully billeted his troops on the towns and aristocratic estates of Aquitania Secunda and Narbonensis Prima for an extended period from 414 to late 415/416. Our sources suggest that these troops were stationed along the Via Aquitana, extending from Narbonne through Toulouse to Bordeaux. Athaulf's troop distribution was probably a strategic decision. Should Constantius have chosen to attack in force, Athaulf would have needed to assemble his forces quickly. Dispersing his followers along the Via Aquitana provided a means for the reconstitution of his army should the need arise.

If we return to the chronicle accounts on the Aquitanian settlement of 418/419, both Prosper and Hydatius tell us that Constantius recalled Wallia's followers and granted them settlements in Aquitania as well as some surrounding cities.[514] While neither account provides an abundance of detail, both chroniclers' geographic descriptions could just as easily describe the distribution of Athaulf's troops in 414 as the placement of Theodoric's troops in 418/419. The only real difference is the absence of Narbonne as a settlement site. This suggests that Constantius may have based his distribution of Theodoric's troops on Athaulf's earlier pattern, using the Via

[513] Cesa, "Hospitalità", 539-552; Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 33-34.

[514] Prosper tells us that Wallia received settlement in Aquitania Secunda as well as certain cities in the surrounding provinces. See Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 419: *Constantius patricius pacem firmat cum Wallia data ei ad inhabitandum secunda Aquitanica et quibusdam civitatibus confinium provinciarum.* Hydatius specifies the city of Toulouse. See Hydatius, *Chronicon* 61 [69]: *Gothi intermisso certamine quod agebant per Constantium ad Gallias reuocati sedes in Aquitanica a Tolosa usque ad Oceanum acceperunt.*

Aquitana as a frame of reference. Hydatius' mention of the city of Toulouse, though certainly a contemporary allusion to the seat of the later Visigothic kings, may nevertheless also support this conclusion.[515]

In terms of logistics, this decision would have made some sense. The cities and estates along the Via Aquitana had already established the methods required for the long-term maintenance of troops. Their previous experience under Athaulf had also provided some personal familiarity with the soldiers they were ordered to maintain in 418/419. This is not to suggest, however, that the cities and aristocrats welcomed the burden. Though Paulinus of Pella probably exaggerates the extent of the devastation, the cities and estates of Aquitania Secunda and the surrounding regions had certainly witnessed some destruction associated with the withdrawal of Athaulf's forces in late 415. The fact that the province was now the principal site for the settlement of many of these same troops could only have been an insult to their previous injury. Nevertheless, in the words of Wallace-Hadrill, the region "was probably overdue for a little rough treatment."[516]

Many aristocrats of Aquitanian Secunda and Narbonensis Prima were directly responsible for the maintenance of a usurper's regime. While we possess no evidence of the state purges that accompanied the fall of Constantine III, Jovinus, and Heraclianus, there is no reason to doubt that punishment of some form was levied against the supporters or perceived supporters of Attalus' Narbonese regime. The form that this punishment took, however, is opaque given the state of the surviving evidence. Our one known official of Attalus' regime, Paulinus of Pella,

[515] Kulikowski, "Visigothic Settlement", 26-27.

[516] Wallace-Hadrill, "Gothia and Romania", 29.

seems to have suffered neither the death meted out to the supporters of Constantine and Jovinus, nor apparently the direct confiscation of his properties.[517]

With regard to the Aquitanian settlement of 419, however, Paulinus does provide one potential piece of evidence. He tells us that his sons moved to Bordeaux because they desired greater freedom, "though with a Gothic settler as a partner" (*Gothico quamquam consorte colono*).[518] As with so much of the *Eucharisticus*, both the intended meaning and the temporal context of the passage are obscure. Nevertheless, it may suggest that while Paulinus maintained nominal ownership of his properties around Bordeaux, he was forced to allow some barbarian settlers to take up residence.[519] If so, this situation could easily have resulted in legal complications. Barbarian settlers would have had access to the influence of Theodoric in disputes with their Roman landlord. Regardless of theoretical questions concerning the extent of Theodoric's power in the region at this time, the Roman legal system was often subject to the intercession of powerful patrons on behalf of their clients. As Theodoric had the backing of Ravenna, one would suspect that could easily have curtailed Paulinus' rights as a Roman landowner, especially given Paulinus' status as a former Roman dissident. Such a situation might

[517] While Paulinus makes frequent reference in the *Eucharisticus* to obscure troubles with the control and management of his estates, he never suggests that his nominal rights to ownership of these same properties were questioned, as one might expect if he was a victim of imperial confiscation. Rather, his testimony suggests that had adopted the status of an absentee landlord, along with its inherent problems. See McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 475-478. Sometime after 421, two of his sons returned to Aquitania Secunda in an apparent attempt to directly manage the familial property in the vicinity of Bordeaux. Paulinus of Pella *Eucharisticus* 498-515. Even after the death of these sons, and the loss of at least some of his property through obscure circumstances, Paulinus himself briefly considered returning to the region before deciding to reside on a small estate at Marseilles. Paulinus of Pella *Eucharisticus* 544.

[518] Paulinus of Pella *Eucharisticus* 498-502.

[519] McLynn, "Paulinus the Impenitent", 477.

explain Paulinus' mysterious reference to one son's vacillating relationship to the Gothic king and his loss of familial property.[520]

Overall, the evidence suggests that Constantius' settlement of Theodoric's followers in Aquitania Secunda and certain surrounding cities was an ad hoc affair, combining both the Roman practice of billeting soldiers as well as the distribution of landed settlement in some cases. Halsall has suggested that age was the dividing principle between these alternatives. Certain of Theodoric's troops who had served with Alaric since 395 were surely reaching retirement age by 418/419.[521] These would have received plots of land either from *agri deserti* or from the confiscation or forced settlement of aristocratic estates.[522] It is also reasonable to assume that noble status among Theodoric's followers probably played some role in the distribution of land, though our limited understanding of the rank and file below Theodoric prevents any speculation on their numbers.

Constantius probably billeted the vast majority of Theodoric's troops, as Roman soldiers, on the cities and aristocratic estates of Aquitanian Secunda and the surrounding provinces. These men would have represented the military strength of the new auxiliaries. As Roman soldiers, they would have had access to imperial tax allotments for their maintenance, either drawn from individual citizens or government officials.[523] If Constantius built on Athaulf's pattern of troop distribution in 414, then the Via Aquitana would again have served as the primary pathway for

[520] Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 512-515.

[521] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 439.

[522] Burns, "Settlement of 418", 60-62; Nixon, "Visigoths and Romans", 70-73.

[523] Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 438.

mobilization. Once assembled, Constantius could dispatch these troops to other regions in service to Roman initiatives.

We should therefore see the establishment of Theodoric's followers in Gaul in 419 not as a single settlement, but as a series of disparate groupings across more than one province. At one level, they represented one part of the larger Roman military. Internally, however, some or all of these groups probably acknowledged the royal status of Theodoric as a point of internal cohesion. The unification of these separate groups of billeted soldiers and landed settlers into the fifth-century Gothic kingdom only arose over time, probably as a consequence of imperial neglect. The death of Constantius in 421 and the exile of Placidia in 422 served to temporarily sever the close ties between Theodoric and the imperial court. These events, however, were only the first of a rapid series that again brought crisis to the imperial center, culminating in the short-lived regime of the usurper John from 423-425. As always, crisis at the center of imperial politics led to neglect of the periphery. The growth and strengthening of a politically, if not geographically, unified "settlement" therefore possibly occurred as a result of the events of these years, when the neglect of Ravenna led to Theodoric's greater assumption of local control.[524]

From the perspective of 418/419, however, Theodoric and his followers were Roman soldiers closely allied to the imperial court at Ravenna. Roman officials still governed the province of Aquitania Secunda and the surrounding regions in 418 as Honorius' instructions for the Council of the Seven Provinces makes clear.[525] Galla Placidia's marriage to Athaulf in 414 had created an alternative imperial regime, supported by barbarian troops, which served to rival the dynastic claims of Honorius. In 419, however, Placidia's continued ties to the Gothic royal family and her

[524] Kulikowski, "Western Kingdoms".

[525] *MGH Epistolae* 3.8.

forced marriage to Constantius had ironically laid the foundation for the integration of these formerly rebellious troops with the Honorian regime.

Nevertheless, while Ravenna reestablished its control over western empire in this period, the weakness of the emperor himself continued to inform political events. In a relatively short span of years, the MVM Constantius had succeeded in establishing a viable new pathway to imperial power by working within the structures of the dynastically legitimate Theodosian regime. Unlike his predecessor Stilicho, Constantius had no initial ties to the imperial house to use as a prop to his power. Instead, his climb to dominance was founded on his ability to deal effectively with outside challenges to the Honorian regime while he himself controlled the emperor from within. Constantius' forced marriage to Placidia, an act in violation of Theodosian marriage traditions, serves as a testimony to the power that he wielded in these years. As we will see in Chapter 6, this marriage in turn provided the opportunity for his own acquisition of imperial power in 421. Finally, Constantius' career offered a model to the ambitious generals who rose to prominence after his death, ultimately altering the discourse of imperial power in the western empire.

Chapter 6: Death of Constantius, Exile of Placidia

The imperial government in Ravenna had reason to feel optimistic in 419. The *magister utriusque militiae* (MVM) Constantius had succeeded in restoring the rebellious Gallic provinces to Honorian control and had forged a strong alliance with the followers of the Gothic king Theodoric. Constantius could now turn his attention to secondary problems, among them attempting to set the Gallic church on a proper footing and the restoration of the Rhine frontier. While the former usurper Maximus launched a second bid for power sometime in 419/420, this threat was confined to the relatively unimportant Spanish province of Gallaecia and quickly succumbed to the energetic offensive of the *comes Hispaniarum,* Asterius. Overall, it must have seemed as if the Honorian regime had finally reestablished a workable status quo in the western empire.

Unfortunately, a quick succession of new conflicts at the imperial center shattered this temporary calm, once again bringing conflict to the western provinces. First, after years of service to the Honorian regime, Constantius launched his own bid for power in 421, forcing the emperor to recognize him as co-emperor. While their period of co-rule lasted only seven months, Constantius' aggressive actions soured relations with the eastern court at Constantinople, threatening to plunge the eastern and western empires into another cold war. More detrimental to the future of the western empire were the crises that blew up after the death of Constantius. In 422, a dispute arose between Galla Placidia and Honorius that resulted in factional violence at Ravenna and the exile of Placidia and her family to Constantinople. While the conflict may have informed contemporary power struggles among ambitious individuals in the Roman government, the practical result of the exile of Placidia and her son Valentinian meant that there was no

member of the Theodosian dynasty present in the west to ease the transfer of power after Honorius' sudden death in August 423. Perhaps inevitably, a new usurper emerged to seize the reins of power, forcing the Theodosian dynasty to once again use civil war to reestablish its control over the western empire.

Finally, 422 also saw the development of lasting conflicts among ambitious officers at the highest ranks of the Roman military. A dispute between the new MVM Castinus and his subordinate officer Boniface over the leadership of a large campaign against the Vandals of Baetica had devastating effects on the future of the western empire. Following the dispute, Boniface rebelled against the Honorian regime and seized the wealthy provinces of Africa in an aggressive play for power and influence. Castinus, on the other, proceeded with the Roman army into Spain only to suffer a massive defeat at the hands of the Vandals. The military debacle of 422 therefore left the Vandals to continue their devastation of the southern Spanish provinces. At the same time, Boniface's aggressive negotiation tactics offered an ominous precedent for the future of civil discord in the western empire.

This chapter argues several points within this overall narrative schema. First, building on earlier scholars' conclusions that show a connection between the attested campaigns of Asterius in 420 and the defeat of the usurper Maximus (during his second usurpation), this chapter combines a close reading of Hydatius' *Chronicle* with comparative evidence from previous usurpations to offer a portrait of Maximus' Gallaecian regime.[526] In particular, this chapter argues that Maximus established his court at the provincial capital at Braga and that the mysterious "vicarius Maurocellus" mentioned in Hydatius' entry for the year 420 was actually a

[526] Michael Kulikowski, "Asterius", 123-141.

member of the usurper's administration. This chapter also argues that there is good reason to assume that the Vandals of Gallaecia served as the military arm of Maximus' regime.

With regard to the conflicts at the imperial center in 422, this chapter examines the primary source evidence and concludes that there is little reason to see a connection between the factional violence that characterized Honorius and Placidia's dispute and the problems surrounding the ill-fated Vandal campaign of the same year. Contrary to the narratives of many scholars, this chapter argues that Castinus and Boniface were not representatives of political factions allied to Honorius and Placidia. Rather, the evidence suggests that the dispute between the generals was due to personal rivalry and private ambition. Though it seems probable that Boniface used his professed loyalty to Placidia to justify his seizure of the African provinces in 422, we must see his actions on this occasion as an aggressive negotiation tactic in his rivalry with a fellow military official, rather than a program of rebellion initiated by Galla Placidia. Similarly, though Hydatius attributes one cause of the defeat of Castinus' forces in the subsequent Vandal campaign to "treachery" on the part of his Visigothic auxiliaries, the evidence does not permit us to connect this obscure treachery to Placidia's influence. Instead, given our meager evidence, it seems far more probable that Castinus' army suffered one of the rare occasions of Roman defeat in a set-piece battle. Both events, however, would have grave consequences for the exercise of power in the last decades of the western Roman empire.

Having solved the major problems of reestablishing Honorian control over the Gallic provinces, Constantius now turned to other affairs. The extension of Constantius' influence into the ecclesiastical sphere had begun as early as 412, with the deposition of Heros, Bishop of Arles

and probable ally of the usurper Constantine III, and the installation of Constantius' own client, Patroclus, into this now vacant seat.[527] Mathisen has shown that the history of the Gallic usurpations had long included an ecclesiastical dimension, as both usurpers and bishops looked for support beyond the secular/ecclesiastical divide to promote their own positions and pursue personal rivalries.[528] Constantius' promotion of Patroclus was therefore perfectly in keeping with the tenor of Gallic politics as well as Constantius' own plans for the reorientation of Gallic affairs towards Ravenna.

Arles was destined to become the seat of the praetorian prefect of Gaul by 418, if not before. As the influence of individual bishops often possessed a direct relationship to the status of their cities within the secular imperial administration, Arles' bishop stood to exert massive influence in Constantius' reorganization of the Gallic administration. Nevertheless, even if Constantius did not harbor such plans in 412, the city had recently served as the imperial seat of the usurper Constantine III and that alone would have raised its prestige within the Gallic context. Constantius therefore needed someone he could trust in the episcopal see of Arles. With his client Patroclus as bishop, the MVM could begin to exercise at least some of the same control over the ecclesiastical structure of Gaul as he did over the secular administration.[529]

This ambition seemed to come to fruition in 418 through Pope Zosimus' changes to the Gallic ecclesiastical administration. Soon after his election on March 18, 417, Zosimus granted

[527] See Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 412.

[528] Mathisen notes that such relationships began with Magnus Maximus' support of Felix's elevation to the episcopal seat at Trier. Though the exact date of Heros' ordination as bishop of Arles is unknown, Mathisen plausibly argues that it occurred around 408 under the influence of Constantine III. See Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 30-31, 35-37. Lütkenhaus suggests that Constans, a former monk, may have recommended Heros to his father. See Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 121.

[529] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 147-150; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 124-125.

Patroclus extraordinary powers over the other bishops of Gaul, including metropolitan status over the provinces of Narbonensis Prima and Secunda as well as Viennensis. In addition, he ordered that all Gallic ecclesiastics wishing to approach the episcopal see at Rome should obtain formal permission from Arles.[530] Several scholars, including Duchesne, Kidd, Oost, and most recently Lütkenhaus, have suggested that these actions may have been the result of an agreement between Patroclus, with Constantius as his patron, and Zosimus: in exchange for the support of the imperial house for his election to the papal throne, Zosimus agreed to make Constantius' client the head of the Gallic ecclesiastical administration.[531] Such an interpretation, however, closely relies on mistaken assumption that Patroclus was in Rome at the time of Zosimus' election. Kulikowski, however, has shown that Patroclus is only recorded in Rome during the summer of 418, months after Zosimus received his ordination.[532] It therefore seems more probable that Zosimus' dramatic reorganization of the Gallic ecclesiastical structures was a response to the new secular administration of the Gallic prefecture as well as an effort to extend his own influence into the Gallic ecclesiastical sphere.[533] Nevertheless, such an endeavor had the potential to strengthen Constantius' program of establishing central control over the Gallic

[530] See Zosimus, "Placuit apostolicae" *M.G.H. Epistulae* III. I. 1.

[531] See L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, Vol. I (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1900) 96; B. J. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461*, Vol III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922) 353-354; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 147-150; Lütkenhaus, *Constantius III*, 125-126. The controversy is also noted by Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 48-50, though he does not argue for or against the proposition.

[532] Michael Kulikowski, "Two Councils of Turin", *Journal of Theological Studies* 47:1 (1996) 159-168.

[533] Kulikowski, "Two Councils of Turin", 159-168. See also Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 49.

provinces.[534] There is therefore good reason to believe that Zosimus' plans received imperial approval, even if Constantius did not provide the impetus for his actions.

Unfortunately for all involved, however, the controversy over the primacy of Arles seems to have brought more discord than unity to the Gallic church. Patroclus faced stalwart opponents in his attempts to exercise his new powers, most notably Proculus of Marseilles and Simplicius of Vienne. As early as 422, shortly after the death of Constantius, Zosimus' successor, Pope Boniface, attempted to restrict the power of Arles. The conflict, however, continued to smoulder throughout the first half of the fifth century, ultimately coming to a head, but not an end, in the dispute between Pope Leo and Hilary of Arles in the mid-440s.[535]

With central Gaul now under the firm political control of Ravenna by 419, Constantius turned his attention to other troubled areas of the western empire. We have evidence of military action along the Rhine frontier, probably in the year 421.[536] The fragmentary historian Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus tells us that the *comes domesticorum*, Castinus, was sent to Gaul for a campaign against the Franks. Different groups within this barbarian confederacy had in recent years supported the regimes of both Constantine III and Jovinus. With the fall of these regimes, either these or other groups of Franks had also sacked and burned the former provincial capital of Trier.[537] Castinus' campaign therefore suggests a concerted attempt to restore the Rhine frontier

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[534] Stein argues that Zosimus' actions benefited both his own ambitions to extend control over the Gallic ecclesiastical establishment as well as the ambitions of Constantius, who wanted to raise the prestige of Arles. See Stein, *Histoire*, I. 271-272.

[535] Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 161-172; Martin Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien: zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert: soziale, prosopographische und bildungsgeschichtliche Aspekte* (München: Artemis, 1976) 73-82.

[536] For the date, see Kulikowski, "Asterius", 127-128.

[537] Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 9. Frigeridus mentions Frankish contingents in the armies of both Constantine III and Jovinus. The historian's information on the sack of Trier comes just after his notice on the imperial purge of the

to imperial control. We have no notions of the success of this endeavor, though the fact that when Castinus next appears in the sources, he is operating as MVM in 422 against the Vandals in Spain, at least suggests that his campaign against the Franks achieved its objective.[538]

A Burgundian group under the command of Guntiarius may also have received imperial attention during these years. Guntiarius was one of the first supporters of Jovinus' regime, along with Goar of the Alans.[539] According to Prosper of Aquitaine, a group of Burgundians received part of Gaul along the Rhine for settlement sometime in 413.[540] As this passage immediately precedes Prosper's notice of the rise and fall of Jovinus and his brother Sebastian, it is logical to assume that Guntiarius received this settlement for his followers in return for his support of the usurper's regime.[541]

After the fall of Jovinus, Guntiarius and his followers seem to have remained settled along the Rhine frontier. In 435, Prosper records that Aëtius defeated a Burgundian king named Gundichar, who was living in Gaul. Aëtius initially granted him peace, but the Huns later destroyed the Burgundian settlement, killing Gundichar and many of his followers.[542] According

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officials of Jovinus' regime. The destruction of the city must therefore have occurred sometime between the fall of Jovinus in 413 and Castinus' campaign of c. 421. Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 207, improbably dates the event to between 410 and 412. Salvian of Marseilles claims that Trier had been sacked on four different occasions by the time of his writing in the early 440s. See Salvian, *De gubernatione dei* VI. 13.

[538] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 69.

[539] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17.

[540] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 413.

[541] As suggested by Scharf, "Jovinus", 4; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 223-224.

[542] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 435. *The Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 118, provides an alternate version of the same event for the year 436. Whereas Prosper credits the death of Guntiarius to a group of Huns, the Gallic Chronicler claims suggests that Aëtius was responsible for the destruction. See the *Gallic Chronicle of 452* s.a. 436.

to the Gallic Chronicler of 452, Aëtius later settled the remnants of this Burgundian group in Sapaudia in 443.[543]

The names Γυντιάριος and Gundichar bear enough similarity to suggest that they possibly represent the same person.[544] At the very least, the names may betray a familial connection. Perhaps Gundichar was the son of the Guntiarius who had established the original settlement in 413. Regardless, the endurance of the Burgundian settlement between 413 and 435 suggests that Ravenna had at some point given its tacit approval to Jovinus' agreement with Guntiarius, allowing the settlement to continue. A treaty between Constantius and Guntiarius may have occurred as early as 413, shortly before or after the fall of Jovinus.[545] It may also plausibly belong to this later period, c.421, when Constantius looked to reestablish the Rhine frontier once the central Gallic provinces had again returned to imperial control.

Imperial attention also returned to the province of Gallaecia in Spain during this period. Since the withdrawal of Wallia and his followers in 418, the imperial government had apparently allowed the Suebi and Vandals of this province to remain in peace. However, Hydatius tells us that in 419 a dispute arose between Gunderic, the king of the Vandals, and Hermeric, the king of the Suebi. The Vandals then blockaded the Suebi in the Erbasian Mountains.[546] Hydatius provides no indication of what caused this initial dispute between the Suebi and Vandals.[547]

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[543] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 129.

[544] Martindale suggests this possibility. See *PLRE* II: Gundichar.

[545] As argued by Stein, *Histoire*, I. 268.

[546] Hydatius *Chronicon* 63 [71].

[547] Courtois suggests that the defeat of the Siling Vandals in 417/418 spurred the ambition of the Vandals of Gallaecia, who now wished to move south into the former's territory. In order to do so, they had to move through the Suebian territory in the south of the province. See Courtois, *Vandales*, 55. Courtois explanation, however, has no support in the evidence, especially considering that we have no idea of the regional settlements of the Vandals and

Hydatius' peculiar entry for following year, however, deserves to be translated in full: "After the blockade of the Sueves had been abandoned, with Asterius the *comes Hispaniarum* threatening, and after certain men under the *vicarius* Maurocellus had been killed in their flight from Braga, with Gallaecia having been left behind, the Vandals crossed over into Baetica."[548]

Most scholarly narratives of this period interpret Hydatius' passage as a Roman intervention in a dispute between the Vandals and Suebi.[549] Some scholars also present Asterius campaign in 420 as a victory over the Vandals, at least partially because Asterius was raised to the status of *patricius* sometime before 422, which might be construed as his reward.[550] As Kulikowski has shown, however, this latter interpretation is impossible to maintain based on Hydatius' text alone. Not only does Hydatius mention the deaths of Romans in his passage, but the actual consequence of Asterius' campaign is the move of the Vandals from a largely insignificant province into Baetica, the heart of Roman Spain. The key to understanding the success of Asterius is to include a fact that Hydatius fails to mention. Either as part of his campaign against the Vandals or as a separate action, Asterius' real purpose in 420 was the suppression of the second rise of the usurper Maximus.[551]

Suebi in Gallaecia. Heather, on the other, sees the Vandals' attack on the Suebi as an attempt to assimilate them into their power base as they had the remaining Alans of 418. See Heather, *Roman Empire*, 265.

[548] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 66 [74]: *Vandali Suevorum obsidione dimissa instante Astirio Hispaniarum comite et sub vicario Maurocello aliquantis Bracara in exitu suo occisis relicta Gallicia ad Beticam transierunt.*

[549] See for instance the accounts of Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 208; Courtois, *Vandales*, 55; Stein, *Histoire du*, I. 269; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 189; K. F. Stroheker, "Spanien im spätrömischen Reich (284-475)", *Archivo español de arqueología*, 45/47:125/130 (1972/1974) 587-606; Heather, *Roman Empire*, 265.

[550] Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 208; Stein, *Histoire*, I. 269; Stroheker, "Spanien im spätrömischen Reich (284-475)", 597.

[551] Kulikowski, "Asterius", 123-141. Stein also suggests the role of Maximus in Asterius' 420 campaign, though he sees the second rise of the usurper as a consequence of Asterius' attack on the Vandals. See Stein, *Histoire*, I. 269.

As we have seen, the general Gerontius raised Maximus to the purple in 409 in order to build his own regime against that of his former master, the usurper Constantine III. Maximus remained in power until 411, when the death of Gerontius led to his deposition. According to Orosius, Maximus then fled for his own safety to live among the barbarians of Spain.[552]

Our sources are far more fragmentary for the second usurpation of Maximus, amounting to little more than chronicle notices. Three sources, the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, the *Consularia Ravennatia*, and the *Chronicon* of Marcellinus Comes, all testify to the fact that Maximus was displayed and killed during the celebration of the thirty-year anniversary, or *tricennalia*, of Honorius' accession to the purple in 422.[553] Both the *Consularia Ravennatia* and Marcellinus Comes also mention a second individual, referred to as "Jovinianus" and "Jovinus" respectively, who also shared Maximus' fate on this occasion. Although otherwise unknown, Marcellinus' comment that both Maximus and Jovinus were led from Spain in irons, suggests that this Jovinus or Jovinianus was a high-ranking member of Maximus' regime.[554]

While several chronicle accounts note the end of Maximus' regime, we possess only a single passage regarding the beginning of the second rebellion. *The Gallic Chronicle of 452* tells us that "The tyrant Maximus obtains the mastery of Spain by force."[555] Though the internal chronology

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[552] Orosius, *Historiae* VII. 42. 5.

[553] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 89; *Annales Ravenna* s.a. 422; Marcellinus *comes Chronicon* s.a. 422.

[554] Marcellinus Comes *Chronicon* s.a. 422: *In tricennalia Honorii Maximus tyrannus et Iovinus ferro vincti de Hispanias adducti atque interfecti sunt.* See *PLRE* II: Jovinus 3 for the suggestion that Jovinus was a military commander under Maximus. Scharf has argued that the "Jovinianus" mentioned in the *Consularia Ravennatia* is a misplaced reference to the usurper Jovinus, but such a view is untenable given that the *Consularia* also records the death of the usurper. See Ralf Scharf, "Der spanische Kaiser Maximus und die Ansiedlung der Westgoten in Aquitanien", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 41:3 (1992) 374-384. For a rejection of Scharf's conclusion, see Kulikowski, "Asterius", 125 n. 14.

[555] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 85: *Maximus tyrannus Hispaniarum dominatum ui optinet.*

of the Gallic Chronicle is notoriously imprecise, Kulikowski establishes a rough date of between July 419 and February 421 for the second rise of Maximus based on the evidence of surrounding passages.[556] Kulikowski further shows that the *comes Hispaniarum*, Asterius, was engaged in a campaign against a usurper in 420, drawing on the separate evidence of a letter of the layman Consentius to Augustine of Hippo.[557] In consideration of the chronicler Hydatius' evidence for the career of the *comes Hispaniarum* in the province of Gallaecia during this year, Kulikowski concludes that Asterius was engaged in a campaign against Maximus, with the Vandal campaign serving as a side project or a direct consequence of the suppression of the usurper's regime. Asterius was therefore awarded the patrician dignity sometime in 421 for his success in defeating and capturing Maximus.[558]

Given that Maximus' first usurpation in 409 and his second in 419/420 both occurred in the Spanish provinces, it is interesting that Hydatius fails to mention the usurper in his chronicle, especially as he provides detail on all of the other usurpers who rose and fell during the first two decades of the fifth century. Considering his origin in Gallaecia, the province that saw Maximus' second rise to power, it is possible that either Hydatius in his youth or certain of his relatives were associated with Maximus' second regime. We might therefore see the bishop's failure to

[556] Specifically, Kulikowski uses the chronicler's notice of an otherwise attested comet in entry 84 and the date of Constantius' rise to the purple, mentioned in entry 88. See Kulikowski, "Asterius", 125-126. This annual date of 419 is reflected in Burgess' edition of the chronicle. For discussion of the problems with the internal dating system of the chronicle, see Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 146-152; Burgess, "The Gallic Chronicle of 452", 57-60.

[557] Kulikowski, "Asterius", 133-134. Though Consentius does not directly state this purpose, the phrases he uses to describe Asterius' 420 campaign are a direct verbal parallel to Orosius' description of Constantius setting out against the usurper Constantine III in 410. Kulikowski's inference, combined with other evidence of Maximus' second assumption of power, is therefore convincing.

[558] Kulikowski, "Asterius", 134-135. For a similar reconstruction based on Kulikowski's arguments, see Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 233. Gregory of Tours mentions Asterius' promotion to the patriciate in his summary of Frigeridus. See Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 9.

mention the usurper, even at the distance of over forty years, as a typical display of Roman aristocratic silence concerning questionable associations in the past.[559]

Regardless, Kulikowski's article allows us to restore Maximus as the "elephant in the room" to Hydatius' entry for 420 cited above. As the entry stands, it is extremely difficult to establish the relationship between the events that Hydatius describes. At its most basic, Hydatius tells us that the Vandals crossed over into Baetica after Asterius had forced them to lift their siege of the Sueves and after some men under the otherwise unattested *vicarius* Maurocellus had been killed in their flight from Braga. The Latin seems to suggest that these two events, Asterius' action against the Vandals and the death of Maurocellus' men, were somehow related to the Vandals' entry into Baetica. Hydatius, however, is far from clear as to how these events fit together.

Kulikowski's argument for Asterius' campaign against Maximus in this year may provide some speculative context for Hydatius' disparate events. Previous readings of this passage have assumed that Maurocellus, as a Roman official, was aligned to Asterius. As we have seen, however, the presence of a usurper complicates the easy interpretation of political alignments based on notions of ethnic identity. Though Hydatius seems at pains to frame these events as a simple case of Romans versus barbarians, the previous examples of usurpations in the first two decades of the fifth century speak against such a simple interpretation, and in fact make it

[559] We know little about Hydatius' background beyond what he tells us in his chronicle. Muhlberger suggests that he may have had familial ties to the Spanish families who traveled east to fill the ranks of Theodosius' administration in the early 380s. More plausibly, Muhlberger notes that the chronicler's name suggests ties to the earlier, fourth-century Spanish bishops Hydatius of Emerita and Itacius of Estoi, who fought against Priscillian. See Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 197-198. Burgess, however, argues that there is no evidence for such familial ties. Instead, he suggests that the chronicler's name may simply derive from a pious memory of these earlier bishops among Spanish families. See Burgess, *Chronicle of Hydatius*, 3-4. Given the state of the evidence, either view is plausible.

essential that we try to look beyond the surface of his narration.[560] If Maximus usurped the purple for the second time in 419, as the *Gallic Chronicle of 452* states, he would have possessed an administration in some form staffed by Romans, just as Constantine III, Jovinus, Attalus, and Maximus himself had possessed during his first regime from 409-411. The "Jovinus" of Marcellinus Comes or the "Jovinianus" of the *Consularia Ravennatia*, who was executed with Maximus in 422, was probably one such high-ranking member of this imperial consistory. It is also probable that Maximus would have established his court in an administrative center.[561] Braga was the provincial capital of Gallaecia and therefore the largest center of imperial power (and the infrastructure it required) in the region. Braga is therefore the most likely site for Maximus to have established his court.

This goes some way towards explaining the place of Maurocellus in Hydatius' entry. A *vicarius* was an imperial official responsible for the civil administration of a diocese.[562] The

[560] See Chapter 3 for the difficulties of interpreting Orosius' *Historiae* in light of Athaulf and Placidia's Narbonese regime and Chapter 4 for the difficulties associated with Paulinus of Pella's *Eucharisticus*.

[561] As we have seen, Constantine III had established his court at Arles by 408; Attalus' second usurpation was centered on Narbonne in 413/414; and Maximus's court during his first usurpation from 409/410-411 was established at Tarragona. As our sources are far more fragmentary for Jovinus' regime, we have little idea as to where his court was situated. Many scholars have suggested Mainz, though this interpretation seems to rely on the proposed emendation of Olympiodorus' text to read *Mogontiacum* rather than *Mundiacum*. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 18 = Müller-Dindorf 17. See also Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 313 n. 4; Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 216, n. 46. Such a textual emendation is problematic. Furthermore, in this fragment, Olympiodorus is describing the city in which Jovinus was proclaimed, not the city in which he established his court. Nevertheless, Jovinus certainly established his court in some administrative center, even if the evidence is not clear on the specific city. His coinage was minted at Trier, Arles, and Lyons. See *RIC* 10. 152-154. He also took refuge from Athaulf's forces in the city of Valence. See *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 71. Any of these cities could have housed his court. With regard to Maximus, this evidence from the previous usurpers would suggest that Maximus' control over an administrative center would have been paramount to establishing the credibility of his regime, as would the participation of Roman administrators.

[562] See, in particular, Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 47-48; 373-375; 481-482; P. S. Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects, and Kings: The Roman West, 395-565* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992) 62-65; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 74-77.

Spanish diocesan capital was located at Mérida, in the province of Lusitania, far away from Braga in Gallaecia. It is therefore difficult to explain Hydatius' placement of the *vicarius* Maurocellus in Braga in 420. Furthermore, as a civilian official, the *vicarius* had no command over imperial troops.[563] The men who died under Maurocellus therefore cannot have been Roman soldiers. While it is true that certain non-commissioned, lieutenant commanders of military units, usually serving in lieu of the official tribune, were referred to as *vicarii*, it is hard to imagine why Hydatius would have felt the need to mention a man of such insignificant status, much less by name.[564] A far more likely scenario is that Maurocellus was indeed a civilian *vicarius* of the Spanish diocese. If he was serving at Braga in 420 that was probably because he was a member of Maximus' regime, occupying a fundamentally hollow position in much the same way that Paulinus of Pella filled the role of *comes privatarum largitionum* for the usurper Attalus in 414.[565] The men who died in their flight from Braga were therefore probably civilian officials aligned to Maximus, fleeing the advent of Asterius' army and the collapse of Maximus' regime.

Maximus' relationship to the Vandals and Suebi of Gallaecia is also unclear, though Orosius' testimony for Maximus' residence among the "barbarians" between usurpations, combined with Hydatius' entry for the year 420, suggests that they played some part in the events associated

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[563] See Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 47-48; 373-375; 481-482; Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects, and Kings*, 62-65; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 74-77.

[564] This usage of the term *vicarii* is discussed by Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 643, 675. Kulikowksi tentatively follows this interpretation of Maurocellus' involvement in 420. See Kulikowski, "Asterius", 126 n.20. On the other hand, Barnwell has suggested that Maurocellus' involvement in the action of 420 shows the breakdown of the civilian/military administrative divide in the troubled Spanish provinces after 418. See Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects, and Kings*, 64-65. The idea that Maurocellus' actions were an ad hoc response to current problems is possible, but unnecessary in the current circumstance.

[565] See Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus* 293-301, with discussion in Chapter 4.

with the second usurpation.[566] Given what little know of this event, it is easy to see the Vandals as supporters of Maximus' regime and the Suebi as fighting on behalf of Ravenna. Some scholars have hypothesized that Maximus' second rise came at the instigation of Gunderic, the Vandal king, who wished to play the role of barbarian "kingmaker" in much the same way as had Alaric and Athaulf.[567] As we have seen, Wallia's attested marriage alliance with the Suebian royal family also suggests that the Suebi may have formed their own treaty with imperial government of Ravenna.[568] Though the precise relationship between these groups is unknowable, these general political alignments fit well with the current reconstruction.

In this scenario, Maximus received the support of the Vandals for his second usurpation in 419. Like the barbarian involvement with the regimes of Attalus and Jovinus, the Vandals formed either part or the entirety of the military arm of the new regime.[569] Barbarian support alone, however, counted for little without the active acquiescence of the Roman aristocracy to form a viable government. As with the British and northern Gallic provincials in 407, the Gallaecians had reason to feel neglected by the central government in Ravenna in 419. While Constantius had used Wallia's forces to deal with the barbarian intruders in the other provinces of the Spanish peninsula, he had apparently left Gallaecia to continue to suffer the depredations of the local Vandals and Suebi. Left to their own devices and dependent on local self-help, it is possible that the Gallaecian noble families saw the potential for the return of some established

[566] Kulikowski notes this probability, though he does not speculate on the relationship due to the lack of solid evidence. Instead, he favors interpreting Asterius' actions against the Vandals as a side project in continuation of Wallia's campaign, with the general's main goal in 420 being the destruction of Maximus' regime. See Kulikowski, "Asterius", 127-128; 134.

[567] Stein, *Histoire*, I. 269. See also Scharf, "Maximus", 374-384.

[568] Gillett, "The Birth of Ricimer", 380-384.

[569] Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, I. 269; Scharf, "Maximus", 374-384.

order in the rise of Maximus, and consequently offered their support.[570] Maximus would therefore have recruited men from local Gallaecian noble families to fill the ranks of his new consistory, including Jovinus and Maurocellus, as well as possibly some relatives of the future bishop and chronicler Hydatius. With this collective support, Maximus established his regime at the Gallaecian provincial capital at Braga.

If the Suebi were allied to Ravenna, then the Vandal attack and blockade of this group in 419 would make some sense as a necessary consequence of their support for Maximus. Asterius would have marched in 420 both to relieve Roman allies as well as to put down Maximus' rebellion.[571] His campaign was successful on both fronts. The *comes Hispaniarum* successfully diverted the Vandal blockade of the Suebi and then turned his attention to Maximus' administrative stronghold at Braga. In addition to Maximus himself, Asterius also captured or killed certain of the usurper's officers, who attempted to flee the province once they realized that their defeat was inevitable. Some of these officers may also have accompanied the Vandals in their retreat from Gallaecia at the end of the campaign.[572] As the suppression of the Vandals was not Asterius' main objective, their movement into the heart of the Spanish diocese was an

[570] This hypothesis draws on Van Dam's theories for the origins of the mysterious Bacaudae as regional self-help groups, operating without the approval of the imperial government. See Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 25-56.

[571] Stein, *Histoire*, I. 269; Scharf, "Maximus", 374-384.

[572] In much the same way and for the same reasons as Attalus and his son, Ampelius had joined Alaric's forces in 410. See Zosimus, *Historia Nova* VI. 12. 3. Evidence of the collusion of some Romans with the Vandals is preserved in Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 437. In his account of the Geiseric's persecutions of Nicene Christians in Africa, the chronicler tells us that Geiseric highly valued four Spaniards, Arcadius, Paschasius, Probus, and Eutycianus, as advisors. These men had apparently abandoned their homeland to accompany the Vandals on their passage into Africa. Nevertheless, they too suffered death under Geiseric's persecution. While there is no indication that any of these men were associated with Maximus' usurpation, it is nevertheless a further acknowledgement of the dangers of assuming political alignment on the basis of ethnic presumptions.

acceptable consequence of the suppression of Maximus' regime. Previous experience with the barbarians of Spain would have suggested that the imperial government could have dealt with them easily when time and resources permitted. The Vandal entry into Baetica was therefore only a disaster with the benefit of hindsight, a luxury which we, of course, possess but was absent from contemporary views of Asterius' campaign.

This reconstruction of Hydatius' entry for 420 in light of recent scholarship on Maximus' second usurpation must obviously remain an exercise in speculation. The surviving evidence does not permit solid conclusions and the safest route is simply to acknowledge the established facts of the events: Asterius successfully suppressed Maximus' second usurpation and also fought the Vandals in 420. For the former action, he received the honor of the patriciate sometime after 421.[573] Maximus himself was paraded and executed in the celebration of Honorius' *tricennalia* in 422.[574] From the perspective of Ravenna, Asterius' campaign had restored the imperial status quo in the Spanish peninsula.

Perhaps the key factor in the decision to raise Asterius to the rank of *patricius* was Constantius' own elevation to the purple on February 8, 421.[575] While several sources use the term *patricius* to identify the dominant military figure in the imperial court, the patriciate was in fact a purely honorary title that denoted status rather than office. Stilicho never seems to have held the title during his domination of the western court from 395-408, and several men are

[573] Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 9. For the date, see Kulikowski, "Asterius", 127-128.

[574] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 89; *Consularia Ravennatia* s.a. 422; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 422.

[575] Kulikowski, "Asterius", 127-128. For the date, see Theophanes, *Chronographia* AM 5913.

attested as *patricii* alongside the generalissimo Aëtius from 435-454.[576] Nevertheless, the title denoted high dignity and influence, especially when awarded to a military officer. Constantius is the only known imperial official to have received the title in the second decade of the fifth century, a fact that may owe something to his on-going struggle for dominance in the court of Honorius from 410 to 421. Constantius' accession to the purple, however, firmly secured this dominance and perhaps opened the way for others, such as Asterius, to receive the coveted title.[577]

Constantius' rise to the imperial throne was the end result of a series of measures intended to secure his position as the power behind Honorius' throne. After the years of potential political and dynastic complications associated with the marriage of Placidia and Athaulf, Constantius refortified his position with his marriage to Placidia in 417.[578] This union produced a child in either late 417 or 418, a daughter named Iusta Grata Honoria.[579] In early July, 419, Placidia gave birth to a son, Placidus Valentinianus.[580] Constantius' marriage into the imperial family and the

[576] T. D. Barnes, "'Patricii' under Valentinian III", *Phoenix* 29:2 (1975) 155-170. For the origin and use of the title, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 106, 176.

[577] Kulikowski, "Asterius", 127-128.

[578] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33 = Müller-Dindorf 34. Olympiodorus ties the wedding to Constantius' assumption of his second consulship in 417. It therefore seems to have occurred on or near January 1, 417.

[579] No source provides the date for Honoria's birth. As she was the elder sister of Valentinian III, the only approach is to situate the date between the marriage of her parents in early January, 417, and the date of her brother Valentinian's birth in early July, 419, allowing time for Placidia's pregnancies. This is Martindale's approach in *PLRE* II: Iusta Grata Honoria.

[580] Prosper records the date as July 2, 319. See Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 419. Marcellinus Comes, however, gives the date as July 3, 419. See Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon* s.a. 419. Most scholars favor Prosper's date. See, for instance, Otto Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr. / Vorarbeit zu einer Prosopographie der christlichen Kaiserzeit* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1919) 342; Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 64; Martindale, *PLRE* II: Placidus Valentinianus 4.

birth of a clear heir to the western throne of the childless Honorius should have solidified the MVM's authority in the imperial court. The pressure he apparently exerted on Honorius to raise him to imperial colleague, would therefore seem an unnecessary and possibly dangerous initiative.

There is evidence, however, that Constantius was correct to view his position in 420/421 as potentially unstable. Not only had Honorius repeatedly displayed his susceptibility to the intrigues of court factions, Olympiodorus is clear that Constantius' marriage to Placidia was far from a model of contentment. As we have seen, after her return to her brother's control in late 415/416, Placidia rejected Constantius' overtures for a year, creating a minor court scandal. She seems to have acquiesced to the marriage only after Honorius himself forced her to do so on January 1, 417.[581] A second anecdote from Olympiodorus, set in the brief period of Constantius and Honorius' co-rule, suggests that these problems continued in later years. According to the historian, Placidia threatened to divorce the Emperor Constantius unless he ordered the execution of a magician who claimed to have to power to fight barbarians with magic rather than swords.[582] While the anecdote offers tantalizingly suggestive evidence of Placidia's religious sentiments as well as the possibility of some barbarian threat in 421, for our purposes it is a clear indication that, even after four years of marriage, Placidia was willing to use the threat of divorce to force Constantius' adherence to her will regarding an apparently minor incident.[583]

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[581] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

[582] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 36 = Müller-Dindorf 38.

[583] For discussion of this episode and its varied implications, see Nagl, *Galla Placidia*, 31; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 144-145; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 377-378; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 82-86. Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 204, suggests that Placidia used this threat frequently.

Finally, Honorius does not seem to have willingly acknowledged Valentinian as his heir. The emperor was childless in 419. The fact that he had dissolved his marriage to Stilicho's daughter Thermantia in 408 and never remarried made it even more likely that he would die without issue. The birth of Valentinian in 419, however, provided a clear heir to the western throne of the Theodosian dynasty. As Valentinian's father, Constantius could expect to continue his dominance of the imperial court at least through his son's childhood and possibly beyond.

Nevertheless, Olympiodorus tells us that Honorius conferred the standard title of *nobilissimus puer* on Valentinian only at the urging of Placidia.[584] The fact that Placidia was forced to work through her brother suggests that the event occurred before the rise of Constantius to the purple in 421. If Valentinian had not received this rank by the time of Constantius' accession, then there is every reason to assume that Constantius himself would have conferred the dignity in much the same way as he would later join with Honorius to raise Placidia to the rank of Augusta.[585] Since Olympiodorus suggests that Honorius alone approved the decision, the event must belong to the period between July 419 (Valentinian's birth) and February 421 (Constantius' imperial accession).[586]

[584] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

[585] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

[586] In Philostorgius' account of this event, the notice that Honorius raised Valentinian to the status of *nobilissimus* occurs after his account of Constantius' assumption of the imperial dignity. See Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 12. Nevertheless, Philostorgius' account lacks the precision of Olympiodorus' testimony. The evidence of the latter author is therefore to be preferred. This disparity in the primary sources, however, has caused some variation on the subject among scholars. Sirago and Oost, following Olympiodorus, places Valentinian's dignity before February 421. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 163; Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 233. To the contrary, Matthews and Martindale both associate Valentinian's assumption of the title to after the rise of Constantius to co-emperor. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 377; *PLRE* II: Placidus Valentinianus.

The title of *nobilissimus* was little more than an honorary rank for children born to the imperial family.[587] Placidia herself had received the title *nobilissima* at some point in her youth, as her brother Honorius had been named *nobilissimus* in c. 386.[588] In the eastern empire, three of the daughters of the Emperor Arcadius, Pulcheria, Marina, and Flaccilla are also attested as bearing the title.[589] For this reason, the dignity seems to have represented little more than that the recipient was an acknowledged member of the imperial house. Nevertheless, the facts of Honorius' childlessness and Valentinian's pedigree meant that the emperor's official recognition of Valentinian as a member of the imperial family was also tantamount to adding the imperial stamp on the child's obvious biological claims to western throne.[590] As such, Honorius' granting the dignity to Valentinian could only provide an additional prop to the power of his sister, Placidia, and especially to that of his dominant MVM, Constantius. We might therefore see Honorius' reluctance to grant Valentinian the title of *nobilissimus* as the emperor's attempt to maintain his position in the face of the growing power of Constantius and Placidia's regime. In

[587] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 56, 163.

[588] Both titles are recorded in epigraphic evidence. For Placidia, see *L'Année Épigraphique*, 1894, no. 157; de Rossi**,** *Inscriptiones Christianae,* 7153. For Honorius, see *L'Année Épigraphique*, 1906, no. 86; de Rossi**,** *Inscriptiones Christianae,* 231.

[589] The *Chronicon Paschale* records the Greek equivalent of the title, *nobillissima puella* = ἐπιφανεστάτη νέα for the daughters of Arcadius. See *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 397 for Flacilla and s.a. 403 for Marina. In both cases, the title accompanies the notice of their birth. The same is true for Pulcheria. The *Chronicon Paschale* records the title with the notice of her birth in 399. However, it later suggests that she was raised to the dignity in 414. As Martindale suggests, this is probably a mistaken reference to her assumption of the title of *Augusta* in this year. See *PLRE* II: Aelia Pulcheria. See also Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989) 63 n. 414. For Pulcheria's assumption of the *Augusta* dignity in 414, see Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon* s.a. 414.

[590] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 163; Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 86.

the end, however, Honorius was again swayed from his hard-line position and succumbed to Placidia's pleas, granting Valentinian the dignity sometime before 421.[591]

Olympiodorus' testimony suggests that Constantius' hold on power remained tenuous before 421. His marriage to Placidia, which should have ensured the stability of his position, was troubled from the beginning and seems to have remained a rocky affair. It was therefore difficult for him to predicate his claims to power on the same sort of community of interest that Placidia and Athaulf had previously shared. Moreover, the Emperor Honorius seems to have worked passively against Constantius' attempts to establish further support for his influence, as suggested by the emperor's initial failure to acknowledge the birth of Valentinian. In these circumstances, Constantius may have seen his survival as contingent on his rise to the purple, regardless of the obviously inherent advantages of occupying the imperial throne.

In February of 421, Constantius therefore forced the Emperor Honorius to recognize him as an imperial colleague. In light of Honorius' past actions, we hardly require Olympiodorus' confirmation that Honorius did so involuntarily.[592] Constantius' rise to the purple was no more popular among the eastern branch of the Theodosian dynasty. The Emperor Theodosius II rejected the portraits sent to the east to proclaim Constantius' assumption of the imperial dignity. According to Olympiodorus and Philostorgius, Constantius planned to avenge this slight through a military expedition against the eastern empire.[593] We may debate whether or not such a civil

[591] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

[592] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34. Philostorgius suggests that Honorius raised Constantius to the throne out of consideration for their familial relationship. See Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 12. As previously discussed with regard to Valentinian's *nobilissimus* dignity, Olympiodorus offers a far more detailed account and fits better with what we know of this period.

[593] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 12.

war would ever have actually broken out between the eastern and western empires, but the potential for another "cold war" such as had occupied the two halves of the empire under Stilicho's regime was certainly present.[594] Both scenarios, however, were averted with the death of the new emperor from pleurisy in early September 421. In the end, Constantius himself seems to have regretted his elevation, not for the staunch opposition he faced from the Theodosian dynasty, but for the more mundane consideration of the hindrances the imperial title brought to the daily conduct of his life.[595] The ultimate irony, however, is that after a career built on the suppression of usurpers, we might view Constantius as the most successful usurper of the first two decades of the fifth century. Working within the legitimate power structures of the Honorian regime, Constantius managed to force his way to the height of imperial power. As with the deaths of the previous usurpers, however, there is little reason to believe that anyone among the Theodosian dynasty mourned his passing.

Constantius' death seems to have brought an initial period of concord between the siblings. Olympiodorus tells us that the close relationship between the emperor and his sister caused Honorius to ignore the many lawsuits that poured into Ravenna concerning Constantius' illegal acquisition of property during his marriage to Placidia.[596] The historian also provides the detail that the relationship between the siblings grew so close that scandalous rumors began to circulate, particularly due to their frequent habit of kissing on the mouth.[597] Court rumors aside, it is probably best to see such behavior as the result of Constantius' absence. Honorius could

[594] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 378 seems to doubt the accuracy of Olympiodorus' and Philostorgius' claims concerning the planned invasion of the eastern empire.

[595] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

[596] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 37 = Müller-Dindorf 39.

[597] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

now enjoy his power as the single emperor, while Placidia could probably relish her independence from an onerous husband.[598]

Nevertheless, such concord at the imperial court was short lived. Olympiodorus claims that a conspiracy of Placidia's advisors, including a woman named Spadusa, her nurse, Elpidia, and the curator of her estates, Leontius, caused the downturn of the siblings' relationship.[599] These may represent the same advisors who had previously encouraged Placidia to reject Constantius' marriage proposals, thus earning the ire of the MVM in 416.[600] As on this previous occasion, however, there is little reason to credit Placidia's actions solely to the whims of her advisors. Over the years, Placidia had proven herself an ambitious individual, fully capable of navigating the intricacies of imperial politics. By 422, she held the official rank of *Augusta* and possessed strong ties to the military aristocracy, including Theodoric's court in Gaul. Most importantly, she was the mother of the obvious heir to the western throne. Such considerations perhaps made the conflict that erupted between Placidia and Honorius in 422 the inevitable result of two individuals determined to maintain and exert their own power.

Regardless, the conflict that began in the court eventually led to fighting in the streets of the imperial capital. Placidia possessed a large following of barbarian protectors from her marriages to Athaulf and Constantius, in addition to whatever likely support she received from political or military factions outside her immediate entourage. Olympiodorus tells us that partisans of

[598] Oost suggests that there may be some truth behind these rumors. He sees Placidia as actively manipulating her brother through her affectionate demeanor in an effort to gain control over court factions. Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 169-172. Sivan is probably correct, however, to assume that the story derives from court gossip. See Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 88.

[599] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

[600] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34.

Placidia and Honorius therefore frequently engaged in violence at Ravenna.[601] This conflict between the siblings came to an end with an apparent victory for Honorius' faction. Placidia and her followers retreated to Rome. Sometime in late 422/423, Honorius took the further step of banishing Placidia and her children, Honoria and Valentinian, from the western empire altogether. The family was therefore forced to take up residence with the eastern branch of the Theodosian dynasty at Constantinople.[602]

The factional discord that broke out between Placidia and Honorius in 422 may also have played a direct or indirect role in the events surrounding the disastrous Vandal expedition of the same year. As we have seen, Asterius crushed the second regime of Maximus in 420. One unintended consequence of his victory, however, was the retreat of the Vandals from the province of Gallaecia into Baetica.[603] From the perspective of 420, this was hardly more than a modestly irritating byproduct of a successful campaign against a usurper, and probably did little to blemish Asterius' fame. Nevertheless, Baetica was the heart of the Spanish diocese, and Ravenna could hardly allow this threat to the functioning imperial administration to continue indefinitely. The moment of reckoning came in 422, when an imperial army under the command of the new MVM Castinus, along with a detachment of Visigothic auxiliaries, was sent to Spain to bring Gunderic and his Vandals to heel. Unfortunately for the Roman forces, the resulting campaign was an unmitigated disaster.

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[601] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

[602] The Gallic Chronicler of 452 states that Placidia was exiled to Rome. Olympiodorus, however, states the destination as Byzantium. It is possible that these testimonies represent two stages of Placidia's progress to the eastern empire. See *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 90; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40. For a similar interpretation, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 176. Sivan implausibly suggests that Honorius exiled Placidia to Rome. She was then forced to flee for safety to Constantinople following the death of Honorius and the rise of the usurper John. See Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 88-89.

[603] Hydatius, *Chronicon* 66 [74], with the conclusions of Kulikowski, Asterius, 123-141.

Even before departing Ravenna, the military leadership of the campaign suffered from internal friction. Boniface, one of the subordinate officers, refused to accept Castinus' command and fled to Africa, where he seems to have established a quasi-independent regime.[604] Now lacking an important commander, Castinus and the Roman forces proceeded into Spain. After initial successes against the Vandals, the Roman army suffered a massive defeat on the battlefield. Hydatius, our only detailed source for the battle, at least partially credits the defeat to some mysterious treachery of Castinus' Visigothic auxiliaries. The Vandals were left in Baetica to regroup, leading to further depredations of the Spanish provinces, while Castinus and the surviving Roman forces retreated to the province of Tarraconensis.[605]

Scholars have long viewed the problems surrounding the Vandal campaign of 422 in light of the contemporary conflict between Placidia and Honorius. Because of Boniface' attested loyalty to Placidia after her exile, several scholars have interpreted the conflict between Castinus and Boniface as resulting from factional discord within the imperial house. These narratives present Castinus as the champion of Honorius, and therefore the implacable enemy of Placidia, while Boniface's political alignment rested solely with the *Augusta*.[606] Scholars such as Freeman, Stein, Oost, and Zecchini take this hypothesis one step further to suggest that Boniface was

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[604] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 422; Hydatius *Chronicon* 70 [78].

[605] Hydatius *Chronicon* 69 [77]. Kulikowski plausibly argues that we should read a passage of the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, usually dated to c. 430, as referring to Castinus' expedition in 422. The passage records the deaths of 20,000 troops who died in an otherwise unknown conflict with the Vandals. See *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 107; Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 371, n. 5.

[606] E. A. Freeman, *Western Europe in the Fifth Century: An Aftermath* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1904) 315; Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 210, 222; Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, I. 275; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 170-182; Guiseppe Zecchini, *Aezio: l'ultima difesa dell'Occidente romano* (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1983) 126-131.

acting on Placidia's behalf in seizing control of the African provinces.[607] Finally, Zecchini sees Placidia's ties to the Visigoths as the cause of the obscure Visigothic treachery that cost Castinus his victory against the Vandals of Baetica in 422.[608]

All of these reconstructions are certainly possible. As we have seen, Placidia had already attempted to establish her own control over the western empire from 414-415. She also seems to have maintained close ties to the Visigothic royal family of Theodoric, upon whom she may have called for support before her exile in 423. Similarly, Boniface's loyalty and support for Placidia would characterize much of his subsequent career.[609] It is therefore tempting to assume that Placidia brought the full force of her influence to bear during her dispute with Honorius in 422/423, resulting in a large-scale effort to wrest imperial power from her weak brother and claim the regency for her son Valentinian. Nevertheless, the evidence for such a dramatic reconstruction is severely lacking, and in some cases, our sources offer far more mundane solutions. Therefore, while the crisis at the imperial center in 422 probably informed events

[607] Freeman assumes that Boniface was acting on orders from Placidia, but that he exceeded these orders in establishing his own control. Freeman, *Western Europe*, 315. Oost suggests that Boniface was acting illegally, but with Placidia's interests in mind. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 170-182. Both Stein and Zecchini argue that the seizure of Africa was completely part of Placidia's conspiracy against Honorius. See Stein, *Histoire*, I. 275; Zecchini, *Aezio*, 129-130. Both Oost and Zecchini further assume that Placidia regularized Boniface's position in Africa through the grant of the *comes Africae* title.

[608] Zecchini, *Aezio*, 129-130. Sirago has suggested that the purported Visigothic treachery was a result of the absence of Boniface, the stalwart supporter of Placidia, in the campaign. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 235-236. While noting the loyalty of Boniface to Placidia, de Lepper suggests that the dispute revolved around imperial approaches to barbarian federates. His interpretation, however, like that of Sirago, is heavily influenced by older notions of pro- and anti-barbarian factions in the imperial court. See de Lepper, *Bonifatii*, 33-37.

[609] Olympiodorus tells us that Boniface remained loyal to Placidia following her exile to the east, sending her money and promising help for her restoration. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40. During John's usurpation, Boniface sided with the Placidia and Theodosius II, forcing the usurper to launch an attack on Africa. See Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 424; Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40. Finally, Boniface fought on Placidia's behalf in her struggle against Aetius in 432. See Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 432; *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 111;Hydatius, *Chronicon* 89 [99]; and Marcellinus Comes, *Chronicon* s.a. 432.

elsewhere in the western empire, it is difficult to interpret any of these events as a direct result of Placidia's influence.[610]

The disastrous 422 campaign against the Vandals was apparently plagued with problems from the outset. Even before Castinus had left Ravenna, a serious conflict had arisen among the military leadership of the campaign. Prosper tells us that Castinus, "by a foolish and harmful command, turned Boniface, a man famous enough in the arts of war, from participation in his expedition. For that man, having considered it dangerous to himself and unworthy to follow one who had proven himself disagreeable and proud, quickly rushed away to Portus and from thence to Africa. This was the beginning of the many following hardships and disasters for the state."[611]

Since his first appearance in the sources as the defender of Marseilles against the forces of Athaulf in 413, Boniface seems to have risen quickly through the ranks of Constantius' military establishment. Four years after Marseilles, we find him in Africa commanding a body of federates against Mauretanian raiders. Though we do not know his rank, his fame seems to have grown from the daring military exploits which he carried out during this period.[612] He also seems to have used this fame to build an important base of support in Africa. He carried on an active epistolary exchange with Augustine of Hippo and obviously established important contacts with other regional officials, both civilian (including ecclesiastical) and military, which would aid him

[610] As noted by Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 90 n.103.

[611] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 422: … *Bonifatium virum bellicis artibus satis clarum inepto et iniurioso imperio ab expeditionis suae societate avertit. Nam ille periculosum sibi atque indignum ratus eum sequi, quem discordem superbientemque expertus esset, celeriter se ad Portum atque inde ad Africam proripuit. Idque rei publicae multorum laborum et malorum sequentium initium fuit.*

[612] See de Lepper, "Bonifatii", 20-27; Zecchini, *Aezio*,129. Augustine *Epistula* 220. 7, refers to Boniface generally as a *tribunus* during this period. His precise office is unknown.

in the years to come.[613] The fact that Boniface was present at Ravenna in 422 may suggest that he had received promotion to tribune of the imperial *scholae* for his exemplary service in Africa.[614] Members of this body were frequently detached for special assignments and military service in various regions. His orders to support Castinus' campaign in 422 would therefore fit well with the expectations of this position. As the tribunes of the *scholae* reported to the *magister officiorum*, rather than the MVM, however, this assignment may also explain some of the friction between Boniface and Castinus.[615]

Following his conflict with Castinus, Boniface fled the palace in Ravenna and retreated to Africa. Prosper, though noting that the conflict was a source of future problems for the state, clearly supports Boniface and therefore presents his flight to Africa in an ambiguous light. Hydatius, however, is much more direct in his presentation. After the entry describing Castinus' disastrous campaign against the Vandals, he states simply, "Boniface, abandoning the palace, invades Africa" (*Bonifatius palatium deserens Africam inuadit*).[616] Boniface therefore seems to

[613] Three letters of Augustine survive from this exchange. *Epistula* 185 is a long tract on the difference between the Arian and Donatist heresies and *Epistula* 189 is a letter of spiritual encouragement. *Epistula* 220, a letter of admonition, dates to a later period, after Boniface had received the title of *comes Africae*.

[614] As suggested by de Lepper, "Bonifatii", 30-31. Accepted by Zecchini, *Aezio*,129. De Lepper notes that Boniface' membership in this body would explain his promotion to *comes domesticorum* after 425, as the holder of this office was usually chosen from the officers of the imperial *scholae*.

[615] For the imperial *scholae*, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 105, 372-373, and 636-643; R. I. Frank, *Scholae Palatinae: The Palace Guards of the Later Roman Empire* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1969) 99-126; Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe*, 95-96, 151-152, 240. For the training of *scholae* in the late fourth century, see Michael Kulikowski, "A Very Roman Ammianus", *Classics Ireland* 15 (2008) 52-79.

[616] Hydatius *Chronicon* 70 [78].

have taken control of the African provinces illegally, in essence usurping the imperial prerogative of the Honorian regime.[617]

Our sources for this period provide no details for Boniface's invasion of the African provinces or the methods he used to establish his control over the region. As previously discussed, Boniface's military fame derived from his exploits in this region of the empire and he seems to have created a network of influential contacts during his earlier residence. These contacts may have made the invasion and Boniface's rise to power a relatively bloodless affair, especially if he presented his actions as a consequence of the conflict between Placidia and Honorius at Ravenna during this year. Boniface raised no usurper in the African provinces and could therefore claim continued allegiance to the Theodosian house through his support for the *Augusta* Placidia.

It is easy to interpret Boniface's conflict with Castinus and his invasion of Africa as part of the factional violence between Placidia and Honorius during this year.[618] The sources are clear that Boniface fled from the palace to Africa, suggesting that his conflict with Castinus began at Ravenna in 422. Boniface's support for Placidia during her period of exile is also well attested.[619] Such a scenario may also explain the apparent ease with which Boniface usurped the command structure of the African provinces. Italian senators had long held effective control over

[617] Both Freeman and de Lepper have noted the negative implications of the verb *invado* in this passage. Both scholars have shown that Hydatius only uses the word to describe usurpation or violent action. See Freeman, *Western Empire*, 315; de Lepper, "Bonifatii", 38, n. 1.

[618] As argued by Freeman, *Western Europe*, 315; Stein, *Histoire*, I. 275; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 170-182; Zecchini, *Aezio*,126-131.

[619] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

the African provinces as both imperial officials and extensive landowners.[620] If the factional conflict between Placidia and Honorius came to involve the major Italian senatorial families, then it is possible that senatorial supporters of Placidia colluded with Boniface, as her emissary, to ensure the establishment of her control over this rich and vital region.[621]

While such a scenario is indeed possible, our single source for the cause of Boniface's African invasion suggests a much more mundane solution. Prosper clearly attributes Boniface's actions in 422 to a dispute between two ambitious military leaders. In preparation for the campaign against the Vandals, Castinus gave an order that offended Boniface and made him averse to joining the expedition under Castinus' leadership. Boniface then fled the palace, apparently to avoid the repercussions of his insubordination.[622]

Prosper's explanation of the affair as a clash of egos is both succinct and thoroughly believable. Rather than attributing the conflict between Castinus and Boniface to court factionalism, Prosper suggests that Boniface only later utilized the dispute between Placidia and Honorius to justify the result of his own ambitions and wounded pride. As a professed supporter of Placidia, Boniface could claim continued loyalty to the Theodosian house, while actively subverting the will of Honorius through his illegal seizure of the African provinces. Indeed, the general would use the same tactic in his dispute with another superior officer, Constantius Felix, while serving under Placidia's own administration.[623] As this later rebellion shows, Boniface was

[620] Matthews, *Western Aristocracies,* 25-30.

[621] Stein claims that Placidia provided Boniface with money to recruit the African troops. There is no evidence to support such notions. See Stein, *Histoire,* I. 275. In general, see Oost, *Galla Placidia,* 173; Zecchini, *Aezio*,126-131.

[622] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 422.

[623] In 427, Boniface's dispute with Felix led him to launch a rebellion in the African provinces. The ensuing civil war raged until 429, when Boniface was again recognized in his position as *comes Africae*. The exact cause of the

perfectly capable and willing to use violent action to achieve his own ambitions, regardless of imperial politics. There is therefore little reason to suspect that some ulterior motive associated with his loyalty to Placidia's faction in 422 drove him to seize the African provinces.[624]

Boniface therefore seems to have positioned himself as a quasi-imperial official in 422, manipulating a crisis at the imperial center for his own ends. In this role, he followed the example of both Alaric (395-408) and Gildo (397-398), who had previously navigated the conflicts between the eastern and western empires in pursuit of their own advantage.[625] All three men used aggression to advance their positions while operating thoroughly within existing imperial power structures. The dispute between Placidia and Honorius at Ravenna in 422 simply allowed Boniface to narrow the context of his play for power to the western empire alone.

Ultimately, Boniface's manipulation of the conflict at the center of Roman power was successful. His actions in 422 brought no visible reprisals and his control of Africa seems to have received official recognition by at least late 423. The award of the rank of *comes Africae* could have come from either Honorius or from Theodosius II after the death of his uncle in August of 423.[626] Circumstantial evidence, however, would suggest that Honorius himself regularized

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dispute is unclear. The sixth-century historian Procopius claims that a rival general, Aëtius, used court intrigue to cause Boniface's downfall. See Procopius, *Wars* III. 3. 14-30. Procopius' account, however, is almost certainly incorrect. Prosper, writing closer to the events, clearly shows that MVM Felix launched the campaign against Boniface. See Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 427. For discussion of the evidence and similar conclusions, see de Lepper, "Bonifatii", 47-56; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 43-44.

[624] For similar conclusions, see Stickler, *Aëtius*, 28, who asserts that the alliance between Placidia and Boniface only emerged after her exile in 423.

[625] See *PLRE* I: Gildo and *PLRE* II: Alaricus 1.

[626] The suggestion of Oost, Zecchini, and Stickler that Placidia herself conferred this title on Boniface, is unlikely given the contemporary dispute with Honorius. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 173; Zecchini, *Aezio*, 130-131; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 36.

Boniface's position, thereby establishing a working status quo with his errant official after the exile of Placidia in early 423.[627]

What effect, if any, Boniface's absence had on the subsequent outcome of the Vandal campaign is unknown.[628] Hydatius provides our only real details of this disastrous conflict. The chronicler tells us that Castinus was initially successful, starving the Vandals into submission through the use of an effective siege. The tide turned, however, when Castinus attempted to engage the Vandals in open battle. According to the chronicler, Castinus was defeated due to both his own rash decision and the treachery of his auxiliaries. After the battle, he was forced to flee to Tarraco.[629]

Hydatius' account of the battle provides few details, and though he cites two causes for the Roman defeat, the exact circumstances remain unclear. Based solely on the evidence that Hydatius provides, it is difficult to interpret Castinus' decision to engage the Vandals as somehow rash or reckless (*inconsulte*). In addition to the fact that the Vandals were weakened by

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[627] In May of 423, Honorius issued a law regarding the shipmasters' guild of the African grain fleet. Though the law is detrimental to the claims of the guild over certain African properties, the fact that Honorius could issue such legislation at least suggests that he had reestablished some direct control over the region. See *Codex Theodosianus* XIII. 6. 10. We also have no evidence that Boniface withheld the grain fleet, an action common to almost all previous rebellions in the African provinces. While we may attribute our lack of information to the accidents of source survival, it is difficult to imagine that Ravenna would allow this most implicit threat of Boniface's illegal control of Africa to linger from 422 until the death of Honorius in August of 423. For these conclusions, see de Lepper, "Bonifatii", 38-39.

[628] As previously noted, Sirago suggests that Boniface's absence on the campaign caused the Visigothic troops to rebel from Castinus' leadership. His conclusions, however, are speculative given what little we know of the battle. See Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 235-236.

[629] Hydatius *Chronicon* 69 [77]: *Castinus magister militum cum magna manu et auxiliis Gothorum bellum in Betica Vandalis infert; quos cum ad inopiam ui obsidionis artaret adeo ut se tradere iam pararent, inconsulte publico certamine confligens auxiliorum fraude deceptus ad Terraconam victus effugit.*

starvation, the Roman army traditionally excelled in set-piece battles. Castinus would have had little reason to doubt that his army would perform well under these circumstances.[630]

Hydatius is also unclear with regard to his second stated cause of the Roman defeat, the treachery or deceit (*fraus*) of the Visigothic auxiliaries. Specifically, it is impossible to determine the nature of this "treachery" or when it occurred in relation to the battle.[631] Nevertheless, if Hydatius' information is correct on the weakened conditions among the Vandal army before the battle, then Visigothic insubordination on the battlefield may offer some explanation for the 422 debacle.

While Hydatius offers no explanation for the cause of this Visigothic "treachery" in 422, it is possible to see this action as deriving from the factional conflicts between Placidia and Honorius at Ravenna in this year.[632] As we have seen, Placidia possessed strong family ties to the court of Theodoric which probably played a large role in securing Visigothic loyalty to imperial initiatives after 419. As these ties bound the Visigoths directly to Placidia rather than to the central government of Honorius, it is reasonable to assume that any threat or action against the Augusta had the potential to strain the political alliance between Theodoric and the Honorian regime. We may therefore interpret whatever treacherous action the Visigothic auxiliaries took in 422 as a direct result of the dispute between Placidia and Honorius at the imperial center, especially if Honorius had already exiled Placidia from Ravenna at the time of the battle. The

[630]As argued by Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 175.

[631] Stein suggests that the Visigoths joined the Vandal troops. See Stein, *Histoire*, I. 275. Wolfram, however, assumes that the Visigothic auxiliaries simply deserted from the Roman army. See Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 175. Heather finds Hydatius' statement suspect, noting the chronicler's hatred for the Visigoths. See Heather, *Roman Empire*, 266.

[632] As argued by Sirago, *Galla Placidia*, 235-236; Zecchini, *Aezio*, 129-130.

absence of Placidia as the locus of Visigothic loyalty would have considerably weakened the active adherence of Theodoric and his followers to imperial initiatives.

A late source, the *Chronicon* of Cassiodorus, composed in the first half of the sixth century, may offer some suggestive evidence that Placidia actively recruited Visigothic support in her conflict with Honorius. The chronicler claims that Honorius exiled Placidia and her children from the western empire on the suspicion that Placidia had summoned enemies (*hostes*) against him.[633] Cassiodorus places this entry under the year 423, the date of Placidia's exile to the east. The chronicler gives no indication as to the identity of these "enemies" and it is possible that the entry is simply a reference to the factional violence that consumed Ravenna in the year 422. Nevertheless, the chronicler's statement that Placidia was suspected of "summoning" these enemies (*invitatorum hostium*) at least suggests that they were located outside the political sphere of Ravenna. Given the close ties between Placidia and Theodoric's court, the obvious conclusion is that Placidia was suspected of calling the Visigoths to her aid in her struggles with her brother, Honorius.[634]

With regard to the current discussion, however, it is important to note that Cassiodorus briefly mentions the expedition against the Vandals in an entry for the year 422 and makes no effort to tie the results of this campaign to Placidia's suspicious activity recorded under the year 423.[635] The chronicler does not mention Visigoths in either context, nor does he address the disastrous failure of Castinus' campaign. These circumstances render any effort to tie Hydatius' Visigothic

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[633] Cassiodorus, *Chronicon* s.a. 423: *His conss. Placidia Augusta a fratre Honorio ob suspicionem invitatorum hostium cum Honorio et Valentiniano filiis ad Orientem mittitur.*

[634] As suggested by Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 210; Stein, *Histoire*, I. 275; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 175.

[635] Cassiodorus, *Chronicon* s.a. 422: *His conss. excercitus ad Hispanias contra Vandalos missus est.*

"treachery" in 422 to Placidia's direct influence inconclusive. If the Visigoths are indeed the "enemies" that Placidia was suspected of summoning to her aid in c.422/423, her efforts to recruit these allies must have occurred sometime after their participation in Castinus' campaign. If her pleas occurred earlier, their active participation in the imperial endeavor would make little sense. Therefore, while the Visigoths' treachery during the battle may have resulted from the conflict between Placidia and Honorius at the imperial center, it is difficult to use the suggestive evidence of Cassiodorus to explain this treachery.

Given Hydatius' vague account, the most plausible solution is that the battle simply represents one of the rare military flukes that sometimes cost the Romans so dearly. The chronicler's inability to pinpoint any one cause for the defeat suggests that there were a variety of different contemporary viewpoints on where the blame should ultimately lie. The accusations of Visigothic treachery and Castinus' recklessness therefore may represent little more than scapegoats for contemporaries attempting to make sense of the inexplicable defeat of a Roman army by weary band of barbarians. If we associate Castinus' debacle with the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*'s later notice of the Vandal slaughter of 20,000 Roman troops, then the resulting scale of the defeat would certainly indicate that such scapegoats were required.[636] Even if the Gallic Chronicler inflated the number of Roman dead, the defeat was apparently decisive, forcing a complete retreat from the province of Baetica. Castinus himself would have required some

[636] *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 107: *XX ferme milia militum in Hispaniis contra Vandalos pugnantium caesa*. For the attribution of this entry to Castinus' 422 campaign against the Vandals, see Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain*, 371, n. 5.

explanation to maintain his position and Visigothic treachery might have provided a convenient excuse.[637]

While it is therefore tempting to view the military and political tumults of 422 as the active efforts of Placidia to seize control of the western empire, the sources as they stand cannot support such an interpretation. The conflict between Placidia and Honorius that brought violence to the streets of Ravenna in this year certainly seems to have informed events elsewhere, particularly in the case of Boniface's rebellion, but scholarly attempts to argue for lines of direct causation are fundamentally weakened by a lack of evidence. As we have seen, Hydatius offers no explanation for the purported Visigothic treachery in Castinus' campaign. Furthermore, while Boniface may have used his loyalty to Placidia to justify his seizure of the African provinces, there is no indication that he actually took this action on her behalf. The same general would use similar tactics under Placidia's regency in 427 in his dispute with another superior officer, the MVM Constantius Felix. Boniface's actions on both occasions would suggest that he was utilizing a new, more subtle form of political revolt: rather than raising a usurper, he was content with usurping the imperial prerogative while professing continued loyalty to Theodosian dynasty. Such tactics would have both a long future and a devastating effect on the later political life of the western empire.

While we cannot see Placidia as the direct author of the larger problems that plagued the empire in 422, Honorius seems to have interpreted her actions as enough of a threat to warrant the expulsion of his sister and her family from the western empire. In late 422/423, Placidia and her children traveled to take refuge with the eastern branch of the Theodosian dynasty at

[637] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 174, suggests that Castinus blamed the defeat on the Visigoths not only to secure his own office, but also to weaken the position of his enemy, Galla Placidia.

Constantinople. Unfortunately for the former *Augusta*, there is every reason to suppose that she faced a bleak reception in the eastern court. Placidia was the widow of both Athaulf, whose death was celebrated in Constantinople, and the Emperor Constantius III, who had received no recognition in the eastern empire.[638] Rumors of her association with homoean Christianity while married to Athaulf, as suggested in the *Chronicon Paschale*, may also have offended the orthodox sensibilities of the eastern court.[639] Finally, contrary to the claims of Valentinian, Theodosius II may have had his own plans for the future of the western empire. Honorius himself had probably stripped Placidia and Valentinian of their titles, of Augusta and *nobilissimus* respectively, during the conflict with his sister in 422.[640] Neverthless, Theodosius II seems to have made no move to restore these ranks, possibly suggesting that he intended to extend his own control over the western empire once his uncle died without a recognized heir.[641]

If Theodosius harbored such thoughts 423, however, the events following the death of Honorius in August of the same year made the error of his judgment quite clear. The exile of Placidia and Valentinian meant that there was no representative of the Theodosian dynasty present in the west to smooth the transition of imperial power. In this circumstance, a new

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[638] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 34; Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 12.

[639] *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 385: Θεοδόσιος ὁ Αὔγουστος ἔσχεν πρώτην γυναῖκα πρὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτοῦ Γάλλαν τὴν θυγατέρα Οὐαλεντινιανοῦ μεγάλου. ἐκ ταύτης ἔσχεν θυγατέρα ὁμώνυμον τῇ μητρὶ Γάλλαν, ἣν καὶ Πλακιδίαν ἐκάλεσεν· ἑκάτεραι δὲ ἦσαν Ἀρειαναί·

[640] No source tells us when Placidia and Valentinian lost these dignities. Olympiodorus simply relates that Theodosius II restored the titles just before the family set out for the campaign against the usurper John in 425. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43.1 = Müller-Dindorf 46. With Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 88 n. 99, I believe the best option is to assume that Honorius stripped the titles from Placidia and Valentinian before their exile, as part of his efforts to diminish Placidia's political status in Ravenna.

[641] As suggested by Stein, *Histoire* I, 282-283; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 179-180; Holum, *Theodosian Empresses*, 128-129; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 29-30. The proposition that Theodosius entertained such ambitions is rejected by Millar, *Greek Roman Empire*, 55, but with inadequate consideration of the evidence.

usurper claimed the imperial seat, forcing the Theodosian house to once again go to war to assert its dominance over the western empire.

Overall, the events of these years bore ominous signs for the future conduct of political life in the western empire. The second rise of the usurper Maximus represents that last attempt to directly challenge the dynastically legitimate authority of the emperor Honorius in the Roman provinces. By 420, however, such methods for the expression of political discontent with the ruling regime were already becoming obsolete. After the death of the emperor Honorius in 423, the western empire would see one final usurpation of Theodosian dynastic authority in the regime of John from 423-425. As we will see in Chapter 7, however, John's regime grew from the confused political atmosphere in Italy following the death of Honorius and wholly failed to garner widespread support.

Boniface's African rebellion in 422 set the path for the future pursuit of political discontent in the western empire. The career of Constantius III had already established techniques for the acquisition of personal power within the structures of the dynastically legitimate ruling regime. In rebelling against the emperor Honorius while continuing to maintain loyalty to the Theodosian house, Boniface's actions in 422 established a new method for political revolt on the Constantinian paradigm. In the coming years, this new, more insidious, form of rebellion would prove a far more devastating threat to the power and authority of reigning emperors than the more direct challenge of usurpation, effectively undermining the authority of the imperial throne from within, while shifting power to prominent generals in the emperor's administration. As such, Boniface's rebellion in 422 is pivotal for understanding the decline of the prestige and authority of the western imperial throne during the course of the fifth century.

Chapter 7: Usurpation of John and the Rise of Valentinian III

The exile of Placidia and her family in 423 and the subsequent death of the emperor Honorius later in the same year, once again threw the western empire into the political turmoil of a usurpation. John, a former *primicerius notariorum* under Honorius, seized the now vacant imperial throne on November 20, 423. The result was a new civil war between the eastern and western empires for the restoration of the Theodosian dynasty. After a brief and largely bloodless campaign, the usurper was defeated, and the six-year old son of Galla Placidia and Constantius III, Valentinian, was acclaimed Augustus in the city of Rome on October 23, 425.

This chapter examines several themes within this overall narrative. First, it argues that John's regime was already on the verge of collapse before the eastern army set out from Thessalonica in 425. The true failure of John's regime lay in his inability to garner wide-spread support for his regime, especially among the western military administration. This fact further informs a discussion of the role of the *magister utriusque militiae* (MVM) Castinus in John's regime. In contrast to the narratives of many scholars, this chapter argues that Castinus played no part in John's seizure of the purple and only offered lukewarm support to the subsequent regime. We should therefore see Castinus' consulship in 424 as John's effort to recruit the general to his cause.

After an examination of the progress of the 425 campaign, this chapter concludes that the ease of the eastern invasion was a direct result of the military inadequacies of John's regime. It also situates the late arrival of a Hunnic auxiliary army under John's *cura palatii* Aëtius in the larger sphere of Hunnic political activity. Finally, this chapter offers some conclusions about the effects

of the vicissitudes of power within the Honorian regime on the later political history of the western empire.

As we saw in the last chapter, a calm seems to have settled on the western empire after the conflict within the imperial family at Ravenna in 422. The ultimate consequence of Placidia and Honorius' dispute only emerged in the late summer of 423. On August 27, 423, the emperor Honorius died of dropsy at the age of 38, roughly a year after celebrating his *tricennalia*.[642] His death finally ended a disastrous reign marked by repeated usurpations and the serial domination of various strongmen. Honorius' lack of issue and the exile of Placidia and her children to Constantinople further meant that there was no member of the Theodosian dynasty present in the western empire to take up the imperial mantle. In many ways, Honorius' failure to designate a successor therefore marks the final act of misrule in a long history of ineptitude.

Given the turbulent history of the western empire under the Honorian regime, it seems inevitable that a new usurper would rise to fill the power vacuum at the imperial center in precisely the way that one did. Even in the best of times, imperial deaths offered immediate opportunities for ambitious individuals, and the weak rule of Honorius had made the western empire an arena for power contests for over thirty years. The surprising fact is therefore not that a new usurper soon held the western throne, but that it took three months from the death of a legitimate Theodosian emperor for him to do so.

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[642] The sources provide two dates for the death of Honorius. Olympiodorus and the so-called *Consularia Ravennatia* cite the date as August 27, 423. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 39. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 41, and the *Consularia Ravennatia* s.a. 423. The eastern ecclesiastical historian Socrates Scholasticus, however, cites the death of Honorius as having occurred on August 15, 423. See Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 22. 20. The date is therefore variously reported in modern historical works on the period. For example, scholars in favor of August 27, include Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 178; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 236. Those in favor of August 15, include Stein, *Histoire*, I.275; *PLRE* I: Fl. Honorius 3; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 379. While all of the primary sources are roughly contemporary, my preference for the August 27 date is based on Olympiodorus' ties to the western empire and the western origin of the *Consularia*.

Following the death of Honorius on August 27, the western court seems to have initially bowed to dynastic protocol and dispatched letters relating the news to the emperor's nephew, Theodosius II, at Constantinople, who was now the senior emperor.[643] According to the ecclesiastical historian Socrates Scholasticus, however, Theodosius did not immediately act on this information. Instead, he worked to suppress the knowledge of the death of Honorius in the eastern empire, while secretly sending a military force to secure Salona in Dalmatia as a forward base of operations if the western court chose to take independent action. After he had taken these precautions, Theodosius publically announced the death of his uncle.[644]

Theodosius' decision to actively suppress the information concerning Honorius' death was probably due to a range of factors that prevented his responding immediately to the situation. The death of Honorius seems to have come as a surprise to the eastern court (as, seemingly, it was in the west) and there were certainly pressing problems that required the eastern emperor's attention before he could consider what appropriate action he should take. The chronicler Marcellinus *comes* notes that there were widespread earthquakes in 423, followed by famine.[645] Perhaps in an attempt to deal with these problems, the eastern court was itinerant in August of 423. It is therefore possible that Theodosius received the news of his uncle's death while he was away from Constantinople dealing with other matters.[646]

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[643] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 39. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 41.

[644] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII. 23.

[645] Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 423.

[646] As shown by Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 88-89; Fergus Millar, *Greek Roman Empire*, 9-10. *Codex Theodosianus* XVI. 5. 61 and XII. 3. 2 show that Theodosius was resident at Eudoxiopolis on August 8 and 9, 423. Seeck, followed by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 179 n. 32, believes this is Eudoxiopolis in Syria. Millar, however, is probably correct that the name reflects the imperial residence at Selymbria.

In terms of logistics, the eastern empire had just concluded a brief war with Persia in 422 and the bulk of the eastern army was probably still focused on the eastern frontier in 423.[647] Indeed, Ardabur, the general who would eventually lead the assault against the western usurper John in 425, had previously distinguished himself in this eastern conflict.[648] The year 422 had also seen the first emergence of new a Hunnic confederacy onto the imperial stage. The Hunnic king Rua had taken advantage of the preoccupation of the Roman army on the eastern front, and the consequently denuded Danube frontier, to launch a massive invasion of Thrace. According to the ecclesiastical historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus, who describes the invasion in apocalyptic terms, Rua's army even threatened the capital city of Constantinople on this occasion.[649] If Theodosius II suspected that the western court might resist his decisions on the succession, it would take time to organize his troops for a western invasion.[650] Even after the rise of John was confirmed, the eastern court still required almost a year to launch the campaign against the usurper.[651]

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[647] As argued by Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 56-57.

[648] *PLRE* II: Fl. Ardabur 3.

[649] Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Historia ecclesiastica* V. 36. 4. For the date, see Brian Croke, "Evidence for the Hun Invasion of Thrace in A.D. 422" *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 18:4 (1977:Winter) 347-367. Croke's article shows that this passage of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, originally thought to refer to an event circa 434, actually refers to this 422 invasion. Accepted by Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 59; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 105. The spelling of the Hunnic King's name varies among the sources. *The Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 116 refers to him as "Rugila"; Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII. 43. 3 as "Ρούγας; and Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia ecclesiastica* V. 36. 4 as "Ρωΐλας". See *PLRE* II: Rua. The transliterated spelling of Priscus "Ρούα" (Rua) has generally been adopted in scholarship.

[650] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 23. Socrates' testimony suggests that Theodosius may have expected western resistance. Though the historian was writing from the benefit of hindsight, the recent history of the western empire could easily have made the possibility of usurpation one of Theodosius' considerations.

[651] Valentinian's proclamation as Caesar at Thessalonica, which preceded the launch of the campaign, occurred in late October 424. See Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 46; Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* XII. 13. For the date, see Seeck, *Regesten*, 351.

Theodosius may also have harbored unrealistic plans for the western succession after the death of his childless uncle. As previously discussed, the eastern emperor failed to restore the *nobilissimus* title of Valentinian, the obvious heir to the western throne, upon his arrival in Constantinople in early 423. For this reason, several scholars have suggested that the eastern emperor may have entertained dreams of reuniting the two halves of the empire under his sole rule. At the very least, he may have looked forward to the birth of a son upon whom he could bestow the western throne at some future time.[652] The sudden death of Honorius would have moved this distant possibility to the present, requiring a careful reevaluation of the plan's potential for success in the current circumstances.

Some scholars have seen the consulship of the western MVM Castinus in 424 as evidence that Theodosius had already begun to put his plans for sole role of the Roman Empire into action during the three-month interregnum between the death of Honorius and the rise of John. Noting the fact that the consulship of Castinus appears in the *Chronicon* of Marcellinus *comes* and the *Chronicon Paschale*, Seeck concluded that Theodosius had originally named Castinus as western consul for 424, only to remove him from the office later, after the general supported the usurpation of John.[653] This belated revocation of Castinus' consulship would explain its absence from the revised and edited laws of the later *Codex Theodosianus*, as well as the accidental

[652]For this argument, see Stein, *Histoire*, I. 282-283; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 179-180; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 29-30. The proposition that Theodosius entertained such ambitions is rejected by Millar, *Greek Roman Empire*, 55.

[653] See Seeck, *Regesten*, 349.

survival of the consulship in the unofficial *consularia* that Marcellinus *comes* and the *Chronicon Paschale* used among their various sources.[654]

Building on Seeck's idea, Stein proposed that Theodosius named Castinus consul as part of the eastern emperor's plan to bring both halves of the Roman Empire under his sole rule. In Stein's reconstruction, the consulship marked an agreement between the emperor and the western MVM that would designate Castinus as the vice-regent of Theodosius over the western empire. In this view, only the antagonism of Boniface, who both vigorously supported the claims of Placidia and also cut off the African grain supply to undermine the authority of his enemy, Castinus, caused this plan to collapse. Without the active assistance of Constantinople in this pressing problem, Castinus bowed to the inevitable and supported the regime of the usurper John. For this reason, Theodosius annulled Castinus' consulship for 424 and ultimately abandoned his plans for sole rule of the reconstituted empire.[655]

Unfortunately, while Stein's reconstruction explains Theodosius' apparent indecision following the death of Honorius, there is absolutely no evidence that Theodosius intended Castinus to act as vice-regent for the western empire. Furthermore, the evidence for Seeck's idea that Theodosius nominated Castinus as consul for 424 is questionable at best. The consulship of Castinus is widely recognized in western sources. As Seeck noted, however, it appears in only two eastern sources, the *Chronicon* of Marcellinus *comes* and the *Chronicon Paschale*. Of these, we know that Marcellinus *comes* used a version of the western *Consularia Italica* as a source for

[654] Laws for 424 reference only the eastern consul, Victor. See, for example, *Codex Theodosianus* I. 8. 2-3; XI. 20. 5.

[655] Stein, *Histoire*, I. 282-283. Oost and Stickler both follow Stein's reconstruction of events. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 179-180; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 29.

much of the fifth century.[656] It is probable that the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* was similarly influenced by sources reflecting the western *consularia* tradition.[657] Both sources were also composed long after the events of the early fifth century, which would have dulled the insult of the usurpation and the memory of precisely which emperor named Castinus consul in 424. Marcellinus *comes* composed his *Chronicon* in the early sixth century, while the *Chronicon Paschale* dates to the early seventh. In contrast, the contemporary *Codex Theodosianus* fails to list the consulship of Castinus, as previously mentioned.

While Seeck's suggestion that Theodosius initially appointed Castinus to the consulship remains a possibility, the overwhelmingly western orientation of the evidence for his consulship actually suggests that a western monarch raised the MVM to consular status. If we wish to maintain Seeck's logic that the emperor Theodosius originally accepted Castinus' consulship, it is possible that Honorius himself nominated the general before his death on August 27, 423. Consuls were regularly appointed in the year prior to their assumption of the office, and notices of the appointees of each imperial court were then submitted to the other.[658] An early notice of the Emperor Honorius may therefore have already begun to filter into eastern *consularia* before Castinus gave his support to the western usurper. Though the last known military engagement of Castinus was the Vandal debacle in 422, Honorius may have intended the consulship as a sop to his MVM's ego after the forced imperial recognition of Boniface's control of Africa. Castinus consulship might therefore have served as part of Honorius' attempt to restore order to the military establishment of the western empire after the events of 422/423.

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[656] As shown by Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time,* I. 183.

[657] For this suggestion, see Roger S. Bagnall, Alan Cameron, et al. *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987) 424.

[658] As shown by Bagnall et al., *Consuls*, 18-20.

It is far more probable, however, that the usurper John appointed Castinus to the consulship in 424.[659] Establishing the proper context for Castinus' appointment, however, requires some examination of the evidence for John's usurpation. As we have seen, either through negligence or preoccupation, Theodosius II appears to have taken little action following the western announcement of Honorius' death on August 27, 423. As the months wore on, it is possible that the members of the western court began to fear for the maintenance of their offices and honors in view of the imminent extension of eastern power into the western political sphere.[660] If Theodosius did indeed send his forces to secure Salona, as Socrates Scholasticus maintains, then the presence of an eastern army in western territory, perched and ready to strike the western imperial center, would have offered an ominous sign for the future of the administration.[661] Constantius III's rise to the purple had brought the eastern and western courts into conflict as recently as 421.[662] Those officials who had sided with Honorius during the factional conflict of 422 would also now have had good reason to fear the vengeance of Placidia in the absence of their imperial patron.[663] Even aside from these legitimate fears, the courts of emperors had always been hotbeds for the conspiracies of ambitious individuals and it is probable that many saw the now vacant western throne as a means to forward their own careers.

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[659] As argued by Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 379; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 236.

[660] For this argument, see Stein, *Histoire*, I. 282-283, and most recently, Stickler, *Aëtius*, 34-35.

[661] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 23.

[662] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 33 = Müller-Dindorf 34; Philostorgius *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.12. See Chapter 6 for discussion of this event.

[663] Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 181-182 presents this idea as a motivation for Castinus' support of John. While we may doubt his narrative of the intense rivalry between Placidia and the MVM, it is certainly plausible that the fear of reprisals from the events of 422 played some part in the support John received from members of the imperial administration.

The result was the usurpation of John, a civilian bureaucrat and former *primicerius notariorum* of Honorius, on November 20, 423.[664] Procopius, writing in the sixth century, claims that John owed his rise to the members of the western imperial court.[665] While most of the historian's other details on John's usurpation are demonstrably incorrect, we would be able to surmise this particular fact even without Procopius' explicit testimony.[666] As *primicerius notariorum*, one of John's primary responsibilities under Honorius was the distribution of the codicils of office to all appointees of the civil administration, both actual and honorary, from provincial governor to the higher ranks.[667] Such a position would therefore have made John a powerful and respected member of the imperial court, capable of organizing a vast network of contacts in the civil bureaucracy to his own advantage. It thus seems probable that John owed his rise in 423 to his ability to consolidate these numerous contacts among the now threatened western administration into a formidable political force.[668]

Attributing John's usurpation to his own initiative and the resources he controlled by virtue of his office within the civil bureaucracy also explains the fundamental weakness of his regime. Unlike previous civilians raised to the purple, John seems to have possessed no strong patron or

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[664] For the date, see the *Consularia Ravennatia* s.a. 423. For John's office before the usurpation, see the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 92: *Nullo iure debitum Iohannes ex primicerio notariorum regnum sumit*.

[665] Procopius *Wars* III. 3. 5-6: οἱ δὲ τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ Βασιλέως αὐλῆς τῶν τινα ἐκείνῃ στρατιωτῶν, Ἰωάννην ὄνομα, Βασιλέα αἱροῦνται.

[666] As seen in the quote above, Procopius presents John as a soldier rather than a civil official. The historian also incorrectly states that John ruled for five years. In actuality, John reign extended from November 20, 423 to 425. Procopius, *Wars* III. 3. 7.

[667] Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 368.

[668] We might compare this situation to the rise of Stalin in the early twentieth century, who used his position as General Secretary of the Bolshevik's Central Committee to gain power following the death of Lenin.

support among the military establishment.[669] Even before the advent of Theodosius' troops in the spring of 425, John's regime seems to have been on the verge of collapsing through the lack of strong military leadership. From the chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine, we know that the Gallic soldiery at the imperial stronghold at Arles mutinied as early as 424, claiming the life of the PPO *Galliarum*, Exuperantius, and probably also John's *magister equitum*, Gaudentius.[670] The *comes Africae* Boniface is known to have rejected John's rule in support of the claims of Galla Placidia and her son, Valentinian. It is therefore probable that he withheld the African grain supply from Rome. This act caused John to launch a failed invasion of Africa, which ultimately weakened the defenses of Italy when Theodosius' army arrived in 425.[671]

This discussion brings us to the role of Castinus in John's regime. Though several scholars have seen Castinus as the ultimate author of John's usurpation and the power behind his throne, Prosper's testimony on the usurpation renders such interpretations problematic.[672] As we have seen, Prosper seems to have possessed no affection for the general, and he attributed the dispute

[669] For examples of previous close relationships between usurpers and their military supporters, see *PLRE* I: Fl. Eugenius 6 and Arbogastes; *PLRE* II: Priscus Attalus 2 and Alaricus 1. For discussion of the latter usurpation, see Chapters 1 and 2.

[670] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 424: *Exuperantius Pictavus praefectus praetorio Galliarum in civitate Arelatense militum seditione occisus est, idque apud Iohannem inultum fuit.* A notice concerning the death of Exuperantius also appears in the *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, entry 97. In the same narrative unit, the chronicler also tells us of the death of Gaudentius who was killed by Gallic soldiers. *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 100: *Aetius Gaudenti comitis a militibus in Galliis occisi filius cum Chunis Iohani opem laturus Italiam ingreditur*. This would seem to suggest that Gaudentius also died in the mutiny of soldiers at Arles in 424. See below for discussion.

[671] For Boniface's actions during the civil war of 425, see Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 424. See also the general sentiments on Boniface's loyalty to Placidia as expressed in Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 38 = Müller-Dindorf 40.

[672] See, for example, the narratives of Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 181; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 379; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 236; Heather, *Roman Empire*, 259.

between Castinus and Boniface in 422 to Castinus's arrogance and incompetence.[673] Nevertheless, Prosper casts doubt on the active participation of Castinus in John's usurpation in two different chronicle entries. In his entry for 423, the chronicler notes: "Honorius dies and John seizes his authority, with Castinus, who was in control of the army as *magister militum*, turning a blind eye to the fact, as it was believed (*ut putabatur).*"[674] Following his account of the successful overthrow of John's regime in 425, he adds "Castinus, however, was driven into exile, because it seemed (*videbatur)* that John would not have been able to assume royal power without his connivance."[675]

Prosper's passive criticism of the treatment of Castinus at the hands of the Theodosian dynasty is noteworthy not only for the mild support it suggests for a secular official condemned by the imperial government, a rare occurrence in literary works of the period, but also because the chronicler had previously attributed the disastrous Vandal campaign in 422 and subsequent imperial misfortunes to Castinus' faults alone.[676] Prosper's clear dislike of Castinus makes his quiet hints at the general's innocence with regard to John's usurpation all the more believable. It

[673] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 422: *Hoc tempore exercitus ad Hispanias contra Wandalos missus est, cui Castinus dux fuit. Qui Bonifatium virum bellicis artibus satis clarum inepto et iniurioso imperio ab expeditionis suae societate avertit. Nam ille periculosum sibi atque indignum ratus eum sequi, quem discordem superbientemque expertus esset, celeriter se ad Portum atque inde ad Africam proripuit. Idque rei publicae multorum laborum et malorum sequentium initium fuit.* For discussion of the significance of Castinus' *superbia* in Prosper's narrative, see Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 92-93.

[674] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 423: *Honorius moritur et imperium eius Iohannes occupat conivente, ut putabatur, Castino, qui exercitui magister militum praeerat*.

[675] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 425: *Castinus autem in exilium actus est, quia videbatur Iohannes sine coniventia ipsius regnum non potuisse praesumere*.

[676] Prosper *Chronicon* s.a. 422. See also Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, 92-93.

is therefore probable that Castinus played no part in the usurpation and offered only lukewarm support to John's regime.[677]

Prosper's account of the ultimate fate of Castinus further supports this impression. The chief officers of usurpers could generally expect to meet the same fate as their patrons after the fall of their regimes. After his defeat and capture in 425, the usurper John suffered both orchestrated humiliation and execution at Aquileia.[678] Prosper tells us that Castinus, by contrast, was only condemned to exile. The fact that Castinus did not meet death in the same arena as John suggests that the imperial authorities were uncertain of his active participation in the usurpation. Castinus' sentence would also speak against any notion of an agreement between Castinus and Theodosius. As there is no evidence that Castinus resigned his post under John, he must have offered at least passive support to the usurper's regime. If we assume, with Seeck and Stein, that Castinus had previously negotiated some arrangement with Theodosius, then the meager support that he probably offered the usurper would also have been tantamount to breaking his oath to the eastern emperor. It is difficult to imagine that this double guilt would have resulted in anything less than execution. Castinus' exile combined with Prosper's testimony would therefore again suggest that John rose to power on his own initiative, without the aid of a powerful military patron.

Accepting Castinus' lack of support for John's regime also provides the probable context for his appointment to the consulship in 424. The collective evidence suggests that John's usurpation was a power grab internal to the imperial bureaucracy with little support from the other power

[677] For similar conclusions, see Stickler, *Aëtius*, 29. Stickler, however, follows Stein in suggesting that Castinus was forced to abandon Theodosius II and support John because of Boniface's aggressive actions against the west. These arguments have no basis in the sources. See also Stein, *Histoire*, I. 282-283.

[678] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 12.

centers of the western empire, in particular the Roman Senate and military establishment.[679] This lack of support would have forced John to court the favor of both groups if his regime was to have any hope of success. While we have no evidence of John's probable overtures towards the Roman aristocracy, his appointment of the head of the western military establishment to the consulship, even before the usurper's own assumption of the office, would have served as a powerful incentive for Castinus to offer John support. Nevertheless, Prosper's account would suggest that the appointment did little to motivate Castinus to assume more than nominal acquiescence in the new regime.

The proclamation of John on November 20, 423, seems to have shaken the eastern court into action. If Theodosius did harbor any notions of ruling the combined empire in his own name, the usurpation quickly showed that such ambitions were unrealistic. While the myth of the unity of the Roman Empire was still an essential element of imperial policy and propaganda, the usurpation of John showed that the west, in reality, required the presence of its own legitimate sovereign. The eastern emperor could therefore only act to ensure that this new western ruler was a member of the Theodosian dynasty. As the child Valentinian was the only male offspring of appropriate lineage, Theodosius was forced to belatedly restore the former dignity and ranks of Placidia and her son. Sometime before October of 423, Placidia was once again acknowledged as Augusta and Valentinian as *nobilissimus*.[680]

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[679] John Malalas claims that John was a Roman senator who was raised to the purple with the consent of his peers. Malalas account is highly confused, however, and of questionable value in terms of historical accuracy for this period and for the western empire as a whole. See John Malalas, *Chronicon* XIII. 50. While it is plausible to assume that John attempted to gain the favor of the Roman aristocracy, there is no solid evidence for senatorial involvement with the usurpation.

[680] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 46.

Nevertheless, Theodosius does not seem to have agreed to support the claims of his exiled relatives without some stipulations of his own. Though no contemporary sources record the details of these negotiations, some modern narratives of this period plausibly assume that Placidia and Theodosius agreed on two interrelated terms in 423 which would go into effect in the future.[681] The first was an arranged marriage between Valentinian, Placidia's four year old son and the future western emperor, and Eudoxia, the infant daughter of Theodosius II. The marriage would take place in 437, when both of the children had reached their majority.[682] In 423, however, this arrangement would serve as a power symbol of unity between the eastern and western courts after the intermittent political conflicts of the last generation.

It is also possible that Theodosius attempted to remove a longstanding, though variously prosecuted, territorial dispute between the two halves of the Roman Empire at this time. The former Illyrian prefecture had formed an administrative battleground in conflicts between the eastern and western empires since the reign of Theodosius the Elder.[683] Two sixth-century sources, Cassiodorus and Jordanes, suggest that Placidia ceded western claims to the prefecture as the cost of the marriage of her son to the eastern princess in 437.[684] Both sources are hostile to Placidia, however, and it is probable that the *Augusta* only ceded claims to the dioceses of eastern Illyricum, specifically Dacia and Macedonia.[685] Regardless, Theodosius was the clear

[681] See, for example, the narratives of Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 221-222; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 184-186; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 42-43.

[682] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 44; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* 437. The marriage took place at Constantinople on October 29, 437. See *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 437.

[683] For an analysis of contested claims in this region during the 390s, see Michael Kulikowski, "The 'Notitia Dignitatum' as a Historical Source," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 49:3 (2000) 358-377.

[684] Cassiodorus *Variae* XI. 1. 9; Jordanes *Romana* 329.

[685] Cassiodorus seems to hint at a piecemeal division in his statement that for the union of rulers to occur, "a division must be suffered in the provinces" *factaque est coniunctio regnantis divisio dolenda provinciis*. *Variae* XI. 1. 9. The

beneficiary of the agreement. As the eastern emperor had the upper hand in 423 and the sources closely bind the cession of territory to the marriage of Valentinian and Eudoxia, it is possible that both points were negotiated before the campaign against John and postponed to a later date.[686]

After his proclamation, John dispatched an embassy to Theodosius II, as was customary, seeking the recognition and approval of the senior emperor. Philostorgius tells us that Theodosius treated these men with contempt before exiling them to various locations in the Propontis.[687] With this action, Theodosius' hostility was made public and an assault against the western usurper was assured, even though organizing the logistics of such a massive campaign then took some time. Preparations extended through the spring and summer of 424. In the autumn, the expeditionary force under the supreme command of the MVM Ardabur gathered at Thessalonica. The sources also provide the names of two subsidiary commanders who were to play major roles in expedition, Ardabur's son, Aspar, and an otherwise unknown general named Candidianus.[688] On October 23, 424, the *magister officiorum*, Helion, raised the five year old

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extent of Placidia's negotiated secession, however, remains a contested topic in scholarly literature. Stein, Oost, and Stickler all suggest that the agreement only ceded western claims to eastern Illyricum. See Stein, "Der Verzicht der Galla Placidia auf die Präfektur Illyricum," *Wiener Studien* XXXVI (1914) 344-347; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 43 n. 56; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 42-43. For the assumption that Placidia also ceded claims to Pannonia, see J. J. Wilkes, "A Pannonian Refugee of Quality at Salona," *Phoenix* 26:4 (Winter, 1972) 377-393; Frank E. Wozniak, "East Rome, Ravenna and Western Illyricum: 454-536 A.D.," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 30:3 (1981) 351-382.

[686] Stickler, who places the initial negotiations for the territorial secession in 423, suggests that the interim period between 423 and 437 was needed for a coordinated reestablishment of Roman control over the Balkan provinces. See Stickler, *Aëtius*, 42-43.

[687] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 13.

[688] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 46; Philostorgius XII. 13. For these generals, see *PLRE* II: Fl. Ardabur 3, Fl. Ardabur Aspar, & Candidianus 3. As previously discussed, there is absolutely no reason to identify the eastern military commander of 424/425 with the obscure western advisor (*PLRE* II: Candidianus 2) who encouraged the marriage of Placidia and Athaulf in 413/414.

Valentinian to the rank of Caesar in the presence of the army.[689] This lesser imperial rank was probably intended to ensure the continued supremacy of Theodosius II as sole Augustus in the event of the campaign's failure.[690] Nevertheless, the events would prove such cautionary tactics unnecessary.

From Thessalonica, Placidia and Valentinian accompanied the eastern army to Salona on the Dalmatian coast. As we have seen, Socrates Scholasticus tells us that Theodosius dispatched an eastern army to hold this city shortly after learning of the death of Honorius in 423. Philostorgius, however, claims that Ardabur's forces stormed the city in 424/425 to use as a forward base of operations.[691] If this discrepancy is not the result of error on the part of one of our historians (or their excerptors and abbreviators), we must assume that forces loyal to John regained control of the city at some point during the long interim period.[692] The apparent ease with which the provincial capital fell, however, suggests that John failed to provide adequate defenses for this essential strategic base. The fall of Salona may therefore serve as an additional testament to the military weakness of John's regime.

This weakness is further suggested by the swiftness of the campaign that unfolded in the spring of 425. From Salona, the eastern army launched a two pronged attack on the Italian peninsula. While Arbabur crossed the Adriatic Sea by ship, Aspar and Candidianus, along with the imperial family, took the land route, moving north along the Dalmatian coast before circling

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[689] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 46; Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* XII. 13. For the date, see Seeck, *Regesten*, 351.

[690] As suggested by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 184.

[691] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 13.

[692] As argued by Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 188. Matthews notes the discrepancy in the sources, but seems to support Philostorgius' account. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 380 n. 3.

down into the Italian peninsula. Philostorgius tells us that Aspar and Candidianus quickly captured the stronghold of Aquileia along the way due to the swiftness of their march.[693]

Perhaps even more than the capture of Salona, the fall of Aquileia to the eastern army raises serious questions concerning western support of John's western regime. The city was in many ways the gateway to Italy and it lay less than two hundred modern miles from John's capital at Ravenna. More importantly, the city's ability to withstand sieges was legendary.[694] In 238, during the opening salvos of the so-called third-century crisis, the career of the unpopular emperor Maximinus came to an end before the walls of Aquileia, when a long siege exacerbated discontent among his commanders.[695] During the civil war between emperors Julian and Constantius II in 361, the city managed to similarly withstand the forces of the Julian, before news of the death of the Constantius led to their inevitable surrender.[696] Finally, the sixth-century historians Procopius and Jordanes, probably drawing on the earlier account of Priscus, claim that Attila was on the verge of abandoning his own lengthy siege of Aquileia in 452, when omens of the city's fall encouraged him to redouble his efforts and eventually take the city.[697] Before the events of 452, however, there is no record of the city falling to besieging force.

Given Aquileia's history, Philostorgius' attribution of the city's capture to the marching speed of the eastern forces of Aspar and Candidianus is possible, though unlikely. Later events would

[693] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.13.

[694] Ammianus claims that Julian's knowledge of Aquileia's historical ability to withstand sieges initially encouraged the emperor to seek alternatives to warfare against the die-hard supporters of Constantius II who had holed up in the city. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XXI. 12. 1.

[695] Herodian, *Historia* XIII. 3 – 5. For a narrative of this event and the career of Maximinus, see David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay AD 180-395* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004) 167-172.

[696] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XXI. 12.

[697] Jordanes, *Getica* XLII. 219-222; Procopius, *Wars* III. 4. 29-35.

prove that John was well aware of the approach of the eastern army. As the defense of Aquileia was essential to the defense of the Italian peninsula, the usurper can hardly have failed to take precautions for its survival. Even if, as Prosper suggests, John's forces were depleted in 425 because of his ill-timed conflict with Boniface in Africa, Aquileia's natural defenses, combined with a modest number of defenders, should have ensured a stumbling block to the progress of the eastern army.[698] The easy capture of Aquileia therefore suggests that the city capitulated to the eastern commanders upon their arrival. Either through his failure to win the loyalty of the local aristocracy or through his lack of support among the western military establishment, John seems to have lost Italy without a fight.

Our sources record that the eastern forces experienced only one setback during their campaign against the western usurper. This setback, however, owed nothing to John's defenses. As he was leading his forces across the Adriatic, the ships of the MVM Ardabur were caught in a storm. As a result, the general and at least some contingents of the eastern army fell into the hands of the usurper.[699] Olympiodorus tells us that news of the capture of Ardabur delivered a severe blow to the morale of his son, Aspar, and the imperial family. The overwhelming success of the land army under the command of Candidianus, however, managed to restore hope for the expedition.[700]

Ultimately, the capture of Ardabur proved an advantage to the goals of the campaign, allowing the eastern general to manipulate conflicts within John's own regime. The usurper still

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[698] Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 424. For Aquileia's defenses, which included strong walls as well as the nearby river Natesio, see Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XXI.11.2; 12.8, and Jordanes, *Getica* 219.

[699] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 13.

[700] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43. 1 = Müller-Dindorf 46.

desperately wished to establish a treaty with Theodosius II and hoped that holding the eastern general hostage would force Constantinople to come to terms. As this political strategy relied on Arbabur's good treatment, John afforded the MVM all of the considerations of honorable captivity, including the freedom of movement around Ravenna. Ardabur, however, used this situation to meet with disgruntled members of the military aristocracy, specifically former generals retired from their posts, and to rally their support for a conspiracy against the usurper. He then sent word to Aspar encouraging his son to march on Ravenna.[701]

John's fall seems to have come quickly after the arrival of the eastern forces under Aspar. Philostorgius claims that after a minor conflict, John was betrayed by his own officials through the conspiracy of Ardabur.[702] Socrates Scholasticus further tells us that Aspar found the gates of the city open upon his arrival and quickly overpowered the usurper.[703] The ease of this victory, however, does not seem to have spared Ravenna from the fate that so often befell conquered cities. The *Gallic Chronicle of 452* claims that the eastern troops pillaged Ravenna, presumably with the permission of Ardabur and Aspar.[704] John himself was sent to the imperial family waiting at Aquileia. There, he was subjected to orchestrated humiliation before the eyes of the populace. After the amputation of one of his hands, he was led on an ass around the local circus

[701] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.13. I follow Blockley's interpretation of the text, which identifies the military officials that Ardabur recruited on this occasion as retired generals rather than junior officers. See Blockley, *Classicising Historians*, 220 n. 84.

[702] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII.13.

[703] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII.23. Socrates also includes a miraculous event in which an angel disguised as a shepherd leads Aspar's army through the lake outside Ravenna. See also Theophanes, *Chronicon* AM 5915.

[704] See *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 99: *Iohanne ad exercitu Orientis victo et perempto Ravenna depredatione vastata est.*

to the jeers of stage performers. He was then publicly beheaded.[705] When news of the usurper's fall reached Constantinople, Theodosius is said to have abandoned the previously scheduled games for the day and led the city in a public ceremony of thanksgiving to God.[706]

John's death in the circus at Aquileia should have officially brought the eastern campaign to a close. Whatever the admirable personal qualities of the usurper as enumerated by Procopius, he had wholly failed to court the loyalty, and thereby enjoy the protection, of the western military establishment. He had lost Africa and presumably Gaul even before the launch of the eastern campaign in late 424. Once the eastern army had marched, this lack of support further crippled his defense of Italy, leading to the easy conquest of Salona and Aquileia. Finally, Ardabur was able to personally use the dissatisfaction among the military aristocracy to launch a court conspiracy, resulting in John's capture and execution. This fundamental flaw in the usurper's regime made the eastern campaign of 425 a largely bloodless affair. It is therefore ironic that the only visible battle that we can associate with the civil war of 425 occurred after the death of the usurper and the collapse of his regime.

Philostorgius tells us that three days after the execution of John in the circus at Aquileia, Flavius Aëtius, a junior officer in the usurper's regime, arrived at the head of a relief army of

[705] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 13; Procopius, *Wars* III. 3. 9. Both Philostorgius and Procopius claim that John's humiliation and execution took place in Aquileia. Hydatius, *Chronicon*, 75 [83], however, suggests that John was killed at Ravenna. Though Hydatius' western provenance may sometimes render his account more accurate, I have chosen to follow the eastern accounts of Philostorgius and Procopius on the location of John's execution, primarily because it is clear that Philostorgius has gathered his information from the contemporary account of Olympiodorus. The Aquileian location also makes more sense in terms of imperial ritual. Placidia and Valentianian remained at Aquileia until the autumn of 425, and it seems probable that John was killed in the imperial presence.

[706] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 23.

sixty thousand barbarian mercenaries.[707] Aëtius had served as a diplomatic hostage among the Huns at some time in his youth and had managed to maintain strong ties among these groups during his subsequent life.[708] This fact may have played a role in his rise to the rank of *cura palatii* in the usurper's administration.[709] When war with the eastern empire became increasingly inevitable, John had dispatched Aëtius to recruit his allies for the defense of the western empire. According to the now lost historian, Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus, John had intended to use the Huns to attack the eastern army from the rear once it had entered the Italian peninsula. John himself planned to meet the eastern forces on the battlefield with the regular western Roman army.[710]

If Frigeridus is correct that this was John's ultimate strategy, then it seems to have failed miserably even before the start of the civil war. The historian claims that the usurper had dispatched his *cura palatii* to the Huns soon after word had reached him concerning the failure of his embassy to Theodosius II. This statement would suggest that Aëtius departed from Ravenna

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[707] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 14.

[708] Aëtius had served as hostage for three years among the forces of Alaric and then for an unspecific amount of time among the Huns. See Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 8. Thompson, Zecchini, and Bóna favor a date of 408/9 for the beginning of his hostage term among the Huns. See E. A. Thompson, *Huns*, 38; Zecchini, *Aezio*, 121-122; István Bóna, *Das Hunnenreich* (Stuttgart: Konrad Theiss Verlag, 1991) 47. The sources, however, provide no information on when this occurred, rendering such arguments purely speculative.

[709] We have little information on the duties of this office, rendering speculation about Aëtius' role in the usurper's regime almost endless. Seeck believed that Aëtius held a civil office. See Seeck, *Untergang*, VI. 105. Jones saw the position as a largely administrative office in the military branch of the imperial service. He does not speculate, however, concerning the duties this official carried out. See Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 372-373. Stickler assumes that Aëtius held a leadership position in the *scholae palatinae*. See Stickler, *Aëtius*, 33. Barnwell seems to envision a purely civil office, though he admits that the sources are inadequate. See Barnwell, *Emperor, Prefects and Kings*, 21. Zecchini merely points out that the rank of *cura palatii* was the same as that of a tribune of the *schola*. Zecchini, *Aezio*, 124. Most interestingly, Stein, following Mommsen, sees this as a western rank parallel to the *comes sacri stabuli* in the east. As such, it is a purely honorary position with no real functions, but frequently associated with the *comes domesticorum*. Stein, *Histoire*, II. 739-740, 796-798.

[710] Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II.8.

in the later spring or early summer of 424 at the latest.[711] At first glance, this would seem like an extraordinary amount of time for the purposes of Aëtius' embassy. Nevertheless, certain considerations suggest the accuracy of Frigeridus statement. First, it would take time for the Huns to logistically organize such a massive expedition. While we should certainly doubt Philostorgius' number of sixty thousand for the Hunnic army that approached Aquileia in 425, the results of this intervention fully suggest that the Hunnic army was substantial enough to intimidate the relatively small eastern forces.[712] Second, and more importantly, the plan that Frigeridus relates bears all of the arrogance of John's first months in office, before the real deficiency of his support among the Roman military was abundantly clear.

As we have seen, it is possible to interpret the consulship of Castinus in 424 as an attempt to court the MVM's favor for the new regime. The rise of Aëtius from what might have been a stalled career among the *protectores et domestici* as well as the probable return of Aëtius' father Gaudentius from retirement to the office of *magister equitum per Gallias* may also suggest that John had some early indication of his lack of support among Honorius' military establishment and sought allies wherever he could find them.[713] Regardless, in the interim between Aetius'

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[711] The *Consularia Ravennatia* s.a. 423 provides the notice that John usurped power on November 20, 423. Allowing for the progress of the usurper's embassy to Constantinople as well as the news of its rejection to filter back to the west, a late spring or early summer departure for Aëtius' embassy to the Huns would make sense.

[712] Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 14.

[713] Zecchini argues that Constantius had sidelined the family of Gaudentius because of their loyalty to Stilicho and the pro-barbarian principles of his regime. In his view, Aëtius and Gaudentius were part of an older ruling faction who saw their chance to return to power through the usurpation of John. See Zecchini, *Aezio*, 137. While much of his argument is implausible and outdated, the fact that Aëtius, as the son of a prominent member of Stilicho's regime and the son-in-law of a *comes domesticorum*, was apparently still serving in the *protectores et domestici* in 423 while in his early thirties, suggests that his career in the imperial administration had indeed stalled. Gaudentius himself seems to have enjoyed a promising career under Stilicho's regime, rising from the *protectores et domestici* to assume the position of *comes Africae* from 399-401. For his career in Africa, see Augustine, *de civitate dei* XVIII. 54; *Liber de Promissionibus et Praedictionibus Dei*, Caput XXXVIII; *Consularia Constantinopolitana*, 399. Gaudentius disappears from the sources after 401, though Frigeridus claims that he rose to the position of *magister*

departure in early months of 424 and the arrival of the eastern army in the spring of 425, these initial fears became a reality. John's own defenses had already dissolved pitifully before the arrival of Aëtius' relief army. Whether through lack of support or through improper organization, he led no regular forces against the eastern invasion of the Italian peninsula. If any minor conflicts with the western army did occur, they have left no trace in the written record. Even beyond the death of the usurper, Aëtius therefore arrived to find a situation for which he was totally unprepared. He had left as an officer of the western empire. He had returned a traitor, leading a hostile barbarian invasion against the legitimate Theodosian regime.

The only advantage that Aëtius had upon his arrival in 425 was the fact that he possessed a powerful and ambitious patron among the Huns. The Hunnic king Rua, like his distant predecessor Uldin from c.401-408, had succeeded in creating a powerful confederacy of barbarian groups beyond the Danube *limes* during the second decade of the fifth century. Also like Uldin, Rua apparently wished to extend his influence into the political affairs of both the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire.

As we have seen, Rua had already launched a devastating invasion of Thrace in 422.[714] The Emperor Theodosius II had probably denuded the Danube limes in order to reinforce the troops along the eastern frontier against the contemporary Persian threat. King Rua seems to have recognized this opportunity and struck with amazing force. Theodoret of Cyrrhus describes the invasion in apocalyptic terms complete with divine vengeance falling upon the attackers. "And

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equitum per Gallias. The sources provide no dates on when he held this position. The *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 100, claims that he was killed in a military revolt in Gaul and seems to connect this event to the death of the praetorian prefect of Gaul, Exuperantius, also killed in a military revolt in 424. With Zecchini, I therefore believe that John raised Gaudentius from retirement to support his regime. See Zecchini, *Aezio*, 137.

[714] For the date, see Croke, "Hun Invasion", 347-367.

indeed, when Rouila, the leader of the Scythian nomads, crossed the Ister along with the largest army possible and was laying waste and plundering Thrace and was threatening to besiege and take the royal city [i.e. Constantinople] without a blow and ruin it, God striking from on high with thunderbolts and storms burned him thoroughly and wasted his whole army."[715] Marcellinus *comes* is much more succinct in his chronicle. For the third entry under the year 422, he states simply that "The Huns devastated Thrace".[716]

Theodoret's account of the invasion of Thrace, however, is misleading. As with many ecclesiastical historians, Theodoret distorts his evidence in order to construct a narrative of God's providence at work in Roman affairs. He therefore ends his account of the 422 Hunnic campaign with the death of King Rua, an event that demonstrably occurred in the mid-430s.[717] This amalgamation of two chronologically disparate events allowed the ecclesiastical historian to present a narrative in which divine vengeance falls upon a heathen king for his villainous action against the pious Emperor Theodosius II.[718] Unfortunately for our understanding of the period, this narrative conceit also leaves us with no real knowledge about the immediate result of the Hunnic campaign.

Brian Croke, however, has argued that we may derive information on the conclusion of this invasion from the surviving fragments of Priscus' work. In his description of the terms of the

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[715] Theodoret, *Historia ecclesiastica* V. 36. 4 καὶ γὰρ ἡνίκα Ῥωΐλας, Σκυθῶν τῶν νομάδων ἡγούμενος, τόν τε Ἴστρον διέβη μετὰ στρατιᾶς ὅτι μάλιστα πλείστης καὶ τήν τε Θρᾴκην ἐδήου καὶ ἐληΐζετο καὶ τὴν βασιλίδα πόλιν πολιορκήσειν τε καὶ αὐτοβοεὶ αἱρήσειν καὶ ἀνάστατον ἠπείλει ποιήσειν, σκηπτοῖς ἄνωθεν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πρηστῆρσι βαλὼν καὶ αὐτὸν κατέφλεξε καὶ τὴν στρατιὰν κατανάλωσεν ἅπασαν.

[716] Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* 422.3: *Hunni Thraciam vastaverunt*.

[717] See *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 116; Priscus, Blockley fragment 2 = Müller-Dindorf fragment 1. See also Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 91-94, though with the corrections of Croke, "Hunnic Invasion", 347-367.

[718] Croke, "Hunnic Invasion", 347-350.

aforementioned Treaty of Margus, concluded between the imperial court and the co-rulers Bleda and Attila in c.435, Priscus mentions that the brothers raised the annual amount paid to the Huns to 700 pounds of gold. Previously, he says, the annual payment was 350 pounds.[719] Croke therefore plausibly argues that Priscus is here referring to the treaty established after the invasion of Thrace in 422, and this interpretation has gained general acceptance.[720]

Many scholars have interpreted the Hunnic forces who entered the western empire in 425 as simply mercenaries recruited and paid by the usurper John. Indeed, the fragmentary historian Frigeridus tells us that John sent Aëtius to recruit the Huns due to the intimate friendship that he maintained with them from his time as their hostage. He also tells us that Aëtius carried a large sum of gold to pay for their service.[721] Nevertheless, in light of the recent invasion of Thrace and the subsequent elaborations of their political agenda in the following decades, it would be a mistake to view the Hunnic intervention in the civil war of 425 as a mere example of mercenary activity.[722] Throughout his career, Rua would follow parallel and complementary policies in dealing with the eastern and western empires. Threats or violent action in one half of the Roman Empire were repeated within a short time in the other, with the ultimate aim of negotiating or

[719] Priscus, Blockley fragment 2 = Müller-Dindorf fragment 1.

[720] Croke, "Hunnic Invasion", 351-352. See also Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 59; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 105.

[721] Gregory of Tours, *Historia* II. 8, quoting from the lost historian Renatus Profuturus Frigeridus: *Quibus permotus Iohannis Aetium, id temporus curam palatii, cum ingenti auri pondere ad Chunus transmittit, notus sibi obsidatus sui tempore et familiari amicicia divinctos…*

[722] As suggested by Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 77; Peter Heather "The Huns", 4-41; Stickler, *Aëtius*, 106.

renegotiating imperial treaties.[723] Following this scenario, it is plausible to see Rua's appearance in the western empire in 425 as a corollary to his 422 invasion of Thrace.

From the Hunnic perspective, the events of 425 probably offered the necessary excuse to force a treaty on the western empire in the same way that they had cowed the eastern empire only three years before. In this instance, however, the Huns received money and consequently, imperial acknowledgement of their strength from the beginning. The situation was also politically advantageous. As before, imperial forces were distracted. If Rua succeeded in securing the throne for John, he could expect to wield enormous influence over the western empire. If he failed in this endeavor, the Huns would still pose enough of a threat to the Italian peninsula to ensure a favorable treaty with the new regime. As it happened, the latter scenario occurred.

We possess few sources on the battle that erupted between Rua's Hunnic confederacy and Theodosius II's eastern forces or the subsequent negotiations that ended the conflict. Philostorgius tells us that after the arrival of Aëtius, the Hunnic forces and the eastern army under Aspar engaged in a great battle, with massive casualties on both sides. "Thereafter, Aëtius arranged peace with Placidia and Valentinian and received the rank of *comes*. And the barbarians laid down their anger and weapons for gold, both having given hostages and taken pledges of faith, and then returned to their homes."[724] According to the chronicler Prosper, the new

[723] This policy resulted in Rua's intervention in western affairs in 433 and a treaty renegotiation and possible military action in the eastern empire in c.435. For the west, see Prosper, *Chronicon* 432; *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 112, 115. For the negotiation of the Treaty of Margus with the eastern empire, see Priscus, Blockley fragment 2 = Müller-Dindorf fragment 1.

[724] Olympiodorus, Blockley fragment 43. 2 = Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* XII. 14 ἔπειτα σπονδὰς ὁ Ἀέτιος τίθεται πρὸς Πλακιδίαν καὶ Οὐαλεντινιανὸν καὶ τὴν τοῦ κόμητος ἀξίαν λαμβάνει • καὶ οἱ βάρβαροι χρυσίῳ καταθέμενοι τὴν ὀργὴν καὶ τὰ ὅπλα, ὁμήρους τε δόντες καὶ τὰ πιστὰ λαβόντες, εἰς τὰ οἰκεῖα ἤδη ἀπεχώρησαν.

government pardoned Aëtius because he managed to secure the withdrawal of the Huns from Italy.[725]

From the perspective of Placidia and the leaders of the eastern army in 425, these results of the Hunnic conflict were perfectly acceptable. Philostorgius' testimony on the handing over of hostages and "pledges of faith" or "oaths" (τὰ πιστὰ) suggests that a treaty was established between the Huns and the new western regime.[726] Rua had probably negotiated a similar treaty with the eastern court of Theodosius after the Hunnic invasion of Thrace in 422.[727] This previous treaty, negotiated with the much more stable and entrenched regime of the eastern branch of the Theodosian dynasty, would have informed and justified Placidia's approach to a similar problem in the western empire.

Furthermore, the immediate Hunnic conflict was, at best, an afterthought in what had been an otherwise enormously successful and apparently bloodless campaign to destroy the regime of a usurper. As we have seen, the retreat of the Vandals from Gallaecia into the heart of the Spanish diocese had done nothing to diminish the prestige of Asterius' otherwise successful campaign against the usurper Maximus in 420.[728] The Hunnic threat in 425 was probably considered even

[725] Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chronicon* 425 *…data venia Aetio eo quod Chuni, quos per ipsum Iohannes acciverat, eiusdem studio ad propria reversi sunt.* Cassiodorus also notes Aëtius' role in "dismissing" the Huns. Cassiodorus, *Chronicon* 425 *…Iohannem tyrannum Valentinianus imp. extinxit Hunosque, qui in Italia erant Iohanni praesidio, per Aetium mira felicitate dimovit.*

[726] Maenchen-Helfen has argued that this treaty and the gold given to the Huns for their withdrawal was the beginning of annual subsidies from the western imperial government. See Otto J. Maenchen-Helfen, *The World of the Huns: Studies in their History and Culture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 1973) 77. Maenchen-Helfen's suggestion is plausible, if we consider the evidence for the 422 treaty contained in Priscus' account of the Treaty of Margus. For the Treaty of Margus, see Priscus, Blockley fragment 2 = Müller-Dindorf fragment 1.

[727] Croke, "Hunnic Invasion", 351-352.

[728] See Chapter 6 for discussion of this event and the primary sources.

less vital an issue. Unlike the Vandals, who still remained in imperial territory, the Huns could be expected to retreat back to their homelands beyond the Danube upon the conclusion of a nominal treaty. If necessary, whatever threat they offered in the future could be dealt with once Placidia's regime was firmly established at Ravenna.

Finally, Placidia's pardon and recruitment of Aëtius, while probably only a temporary solution, was perfectly in keeping with past imperial solutions to usurpation. Upon the conclusion of civil wars, victorious commanders had always recruited heavily from the officers and armies of defeated rivals. Though the result was not always beneficial, this tactic at least offered the possibility of strengthening the military forces of the victorious regime and preventing the outbreak of further resistance.[729] Placidia's regime probably had little choice in pardoning Aëtius in 425. The relatively small eastern army at her disposal was apparently unprepared for the Hunnic invasion. Nevertheless, as with her treaty with Rua, she could couch Aëtius' pardon and recruitment in previous precedent. In time, perhaps he would even become a useful supporter of her regime.

While these considerations probably informed Placidia's reaction to the Hunnic conflict in 425, we know from the benefit of hindsight that the event heralded ominous signs for the future political stability of Placidia and Valentinian's regime. The Huns under Rua, and later under his nephews Bleda and Attila, would constitute an ongoing threat to both halves of the Roman Empire until Attila's death in 453. This threat was primarily military for the eastern half of the

[729] Following the Battle of Frigidus in 395, Stilicho assumed control of both the eastern army as well as the recently defeated western army. As Cameron argues, however, it is probable that Stilicho was unable to maintain discipline over this combined force of formerly antagonistic troops. See Cameron, *Claudian*, 161-167. See also Kulikowski, *Gothic Wars*, 166.

empire.[730] For the west, however, the continued Hunnic support for their client Aëtius, at least through 439, brought the Huns into a close relationship with the political life of the western empire, severely limiting the free exercise of Placidia's control. Just as Boniface had with his aggressive seizure of the African provinces in 422, Aëtius would also prove perfectly capable and willing to use violent tactics against the imperial government in pursuit of his own private ambitions. Unlike Boniface, however, Aëtius' staunch allies among the Huns meant that he possessed an independent power base outside the Roman political sphere. This relationship ensured that Aëtius could continue to exert influence over the imperial court even when his Roman support base was weakened or completely defeated, as it was in the civil war of 432-433.[731] Aëtius was therefore destined to become a powerful political figure in the following years, emerging as the dominant military official by 433 and maintaining a formidable influence over the imperial court of Placidia and Valentinian until his death in 454.

Nevertheless, neither Placidia nor her eastern partners could have expected such eventualities in the heady atmosphere of victory in 425. The eastern army had successfully overthrown the usurper John's regime and the careful exercise of diplomacy had removed a major Hunnic threat. With Italy now secured for the new regime, the imperial family proceeded first to Ravenna and later to Rome for Valentinian's coronation and the formal reestablishment of Theodosian control over the western empire.

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[730] For the massive Hunnic campaigns against the eastern empire in the 441 and 447, see Thompson, *Huns*, 86-103; Maenchen-Helfen, *World of the Huns*, 108-125.

[731] Boniface, with the support of Placidia, succeeded in defeating the forces of Aëtius outside of Rimini in 432. Aëtius initially fled to the Huns, who invaded Italy in the following year and forced Placidia to reinstate him as the dominant general. See Prosper, *Chronicon* 432; *Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 112, 115.

Socrates tells us that Theodosius II had originally planned to travel to Italy and personally perform the ceremony raising his young cousin to Augustus. He had also planned to use the occasion to instruct the Italians on the folly of raising usurpers. Theodosius, however, fell ill at Thessalonica and was forced to return to Constantinople. He therefore sent the imperial diadem to the west in the care of Helion, his *magister officiorum et patricius*, who had previously performed Valentinian's investiture as Caesar.[732] With Helion once again officiating, Valentinian was raised to the rank of Augustus at Rome on October 23, 425, exactly a year after he had assumed the title of Caesar.[733] Unfortunately for the strength of his new regime, Valentinian III was six years old when he obtained mastery over the western Roman empire. His youth therefore ensured that Galla Placidia would wield effective power as regent for her son until he reached maturity. Indeed, following his notice on the accession of Valentinian, the Gallic Chronicler of 452 includes the caustic remark, "At last, Placidia had been advanced to the royal power she desired."[734]

The circumstances that led to Valentinian's assumption of the purple and the new regime founded on his dynastic legitimacy bear striking similarities to those surrounding the rise of his uncle Honorius in 395. Like Honorius, Valentinian was brought to power through the campaign of an eastern army against a western usurper. Also like his uncle, Valentinian's youth required the establishment of a regency that could guide the empire until the child was old enough to assume direct control. In the case of Honorius, these circumstances had resulted in a weak imperial center and the consequent chaos of usurpation. The fact that Valentinian's regime was

[732] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 24.

[733] For the date, see *Chronicon Paschale*, s.a. 425. Millar suggests the date of October 25 for the event, though he does not explain his reasons. See Millar, *Greek Roman Empire*, 55.

[734] *The Gallic Chronicle of 452*, 103: *Placidia tandem optato illata regno.*

spared such overt threats is a testimony to the changed political climate of the western empire after the disastrous reign of Honorius.

We may attribute this new political situation to a variety of factors. First, Valentinian's regime enjoyed a close relationship with the eastern empire. The vicious political antagonism that characterized relations between east and west during the regency of Stilicho saw no reflection in the politics of 425. Instead, Theodosius' role in establishing Valentinian's regime in 425, and then the marriage alliance between Valentinian and Eudoxia that was celebrated in 437, served to bind the interests of the eastern and western branches of the Theodosian dynasty.[735] While some scholars have suggested that this amounted to eastern dominance of the western court and therefore a limitation on free exercise of western power, the regime of Valentinian could nevertheless rely on eastern support for western initiatives.[736] The result was joint east/west campaigns against the Vandals in Africa from 431-435 and again in 441.[737] While neither initiative was ultimately successful in eradicating the Vandal threat (in fact, the 441 campaign never even left Sicily), such campaigns served not only as a visible symbol of the importance of Africa to both halves of the empire, but also of the close relationship of eastern and western interests.

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[735] As noted by Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 381; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 210. For the marriage alliance, see Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* VII. 44; Marcellinus *comes*, *Chronicon* s.a. 437; *Chronicon Paschale* s.a. 437.

[736] Stickler argues that Placidia and Valentinian's new MVM Constantius Felix, whose career is unattested in the sources before 425, was an official of the eastern court imposed on the western empire in order to guide the new regime according to dictates of Theodosius II. Stickler's argument is compelling, but unsupported in the sources. See Stickler, *Aëtius*, 38.

[737] Procopius, *Wars* III. 3. 34-35. For his efforts, Aspar was awarded the consulship in 434. Blockley plausibly suggests that the eastern forces remained in Carthage until the formal conclusion of the Vandal treaty of 435. See Blockley, *East Roman Foreign Policy*, 60. For the 441 campaign, see Prosper, *Chronicon* s.a. 441. See also, Clover, "Geiseric the Statesman", 79-80.

For the themes of this study, however, the most striking change to Roman political life in the reign of Valentinian is the absence of any instance of usurpation, the phenomenon that had so characterized the rule of Honorius. The closer ties between the eastern and western branches of the Theodosian dynasty as well as the eastern show of strength in 425 may have played some role in preventing direct challenges to the ruling regime. The more probable explanation, however, is that usurpation had simply ceased to be a viable avenue into which to channel political discontent within the western empire.

While we must locate the cause of the many usurpations that plagued the western empire from 407-420 in the political weakness of the central government, the Honorian regime had proven remarkably resilient and successful in eradicating the various challenges to its imperial authority. As we have seen, these were years of political chaos, in which at least nine men attempted to claim the purple. Where our meager sources provide evidence, we find that many of these men enjoyed substantial support among the military and senatorial aristocracies. Indeed, Constantine III seems to have enjoyed overwhelming support in the Gallic provinces during the early years of his reign. Attalus, on the other hand, had received the backing of the Roman senate during his first rise to power and the support of Galla Placidia and the southern Gallic aristocracy for his second. Nevertheless, each of these men had succumbed to either internal dissent or the tireless efforts of Honorius' generals. The overwhelming failure of these challenges to Honorius seems to have transformed the future expression of political discord with the ruling regime, rendering usurpation an obsolete phenomenon. If any notions of the viability of this path to power still lingered after 420, the further dismal failure of John's regime to garner wide-spread support from 423-425, even in the absence of a reigning western emperor, seems to have laid such ambitions to rest.

In the new political atmosphere after 425, political discontent would shift from the open threat of usurpation to a more insidious form of rebellion: internal struggles among ambitious strongmen, all under the supposed aegis of the ruling dynasty. Thus, civil war would continue to characterize the history of the following decades, but the disputants now fought for personal ambition and status within Valentinian's regime, with the ultimate goal of dominating the imperial court in the same way as Stilicho and Constantius had dominated Honorius in the past. As we have seen, the beginnings of this shift in the dynamics of political conflict had emerged as early as 422, when Boniface seized control of the African provinces to use as an independent power base in his struggles with the imperial court. From 425-439, the main generals of Placidia and Valentinian's regime, Constantius Felix, Boniface, and Aëtius would freely employ such tactics in their internal struggles for military dominance over the western regime.

Unfortunately for the future of the western empire, the adoption of this new form of political conflict would fundamentally alter the discourse of imperial power during the course of the fifth century. The prestige of the emperor would continue to decline as true power was increasingly located in the figure of the dominant general. While Stilicho and Constantius had set the precedent for the military domination of a weak emperor, such a situation need not have characterized the regime of Placidia and Valentinian. As we have seen, Placidia was already an astute and ambitious political actor in 425. The evidence would further suggest that Valentinian III in his mature years bore little relation to his uncle Honorius, possessing both determination and ambition in his own right.[738] We must therefore attribute the later decline of western

[738] For this image of Valentinian, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 253-258, 298-304. While the personality of Valentinian is hardly more visible in the sources than is that of his uncle Honorius, he at least appears to have been capable of taking decisive action. According to Priscus he refused to hand over his sister Honoria to Attila, though Theodosius II encouraged him to do so. John of Antioch, fragment 199.2. He also killed his over-powerful general Aëtius with his own hand, after the collapse of Attila's confederacy. See John of Antioch, fragment 201.

imperial prestige to the new tactics of political dispute that arose after 425, as otherwise capable emperors failed to meet the challenges offered by their own military officials.

These problems that shaped the later history of the western Roman empire ultimately led to the permanent collapse of central authority, but they find their origins in both the failures and successes of the Honorian regime. The weakness of the emperor Honorius required the existence of firm military leadership to maintain control over the western empire. The overwhelming success of this military leadership in eradicating the various threats to the dynastic legitimacy of the imperial house served both to increase the prestige of dominant military figures and to force the exercise of political discontent and the pursuit of personal ambition to operate within the structures of the existing imperial administration. Ironically, the practice of usurpation had by its very nature maintained and reinforced the traditional imperial ideology that situated power in the person of the emperor. The shift away from direct threats of usurpation to the more subtle form of political domination from within the ruling regime, however, seems to have had a far more devastating effect on the political authority of Valentinian and his successors, as well as on the overall prestige of the imperial throne. We should therefore see the political vicissitudes of the Honorian regime as essential for our understanding of the later course of the western empire.

Conclusion

This dissertation has offered a new analytical narrative of the political trials and conflicts of the Theodosian dynasty during the years 405-425 C.E. It serves both to correct older scholarly views of the period as a time of severe ethnically-driven barbarian/Roman conflict as well as to present nuanced readings of particular events and of the careers of individual political actors. As we have seen, the weakness of the western empire under the regime of the emperor Honorius led to a variety of major crises, including numerous usurpations of imperial authority and the influx of unauthorized barbarian groups into the Roman empire. In many instances, the regimes of usurpers received support from barbarian groups whose leaders were generally seeking acceptance in the Roman political sphere. This is particularly true of the regime of the Gallic usurper Jovinus from 411-412, the first and second regimes of Attalus in the years 409-410 and 413-415, and probably the second usurpation of Maximus in 420. The fact of close collaborations and mutually beneficial relationships between Romans and barbarians during this period necessarily complicates the traditional view of an inherent Roman/barbarian antagonism, which so often informs scholarly readings of the primary sources. While this dissertation in no way seeks to deny that some barbarian groups carried out massive depredations on Roman territory, we must see such violent action as closely tied to the intra-Roman political conflicts of these years, while also acknowledging the multiple instances of Roman/barbarian alliances both against and in support of the Honorian regime. The resulting narrative therefore offers a far more complex image of Roman/barbarian relationships during this period.

The measures of the central government to reclaim control over the west required the rise of a military strongman, as well as efforts to find a viable means to include barbarian groups in the

western political sphere. The first requirement was fulfilled in the career of the MVM and later emperor Constantius III. As we have seen, Constantius enjoyed enormous success in restoring Honorian control to the western empire during this period, eradicating the threats of both usurpers as well as unauthorized barbarian groups. Consequently, he was able to dominate the weak Honorian regime and then force the emperor to raise him to co-emperor in 421. Constantius' successes both eliminated usurpation as a viable means of expressing political discontent and provided a precedent for the pursuit of personal ambitions within the administrative structure of the legitimate regime in a way that would inform the careers and objectives of many later military officials.

Similarly, the rise of Honorius' half-sister Galla Placidia as a political actor also played a significant role in shaping the future of political life in the later empire. Placidia initially worked to exploit the weakness of her brother's regime during the years 414-415, marrying the Gothic king Athaulf and forming an alternative, yet potentially legitimate, Theodosian regime based in southern Gaul. This action made her a viable locus of power for both Gallic provincial aristocrats dissatisfied with the regime of her brother, as well as for Athaulf's followers who sought imperial recognition and inclusion in Roman power structures on their own terms. After the death of Athaulf and the return of Placidia to Ravenna, her continued relationship with the Gothic royal family formed the binding principle for the integration of this group into the Honorian regime. Placidia's marriage to Constantius in 417 further promoted this union of interests, which found physical manifestation in the Visigothic settlement in Aquitania in the following year. Nevertheless, the fact that Placidia was both a member of the Theodosian dynasty and a political actor in her own right continued to provide ambitious individuals with a pathway to rebellion against the Honorian regime long after Placidia herself had returned to

Ravenna. As we have seen, the general Boniface seems to have exploited an internal dispute between Placidia and Honorius in 422 to justify his seizure of the African provinces in pursuit of his own ambitions. While rebelling against the Honorian regime, Boniface could continue to maintain his loyalty to the ruling Theodosian dynasty by professing his support for Placidia.

Collectively, the challenges that the emperor Honorius and the Theodosian dynasty at large faced during the period resulted in fundamental changes to the political life of the western Roman empire. The overwhelming success of Constantius in dealing with usurpers from 411 to 420, followed by the complete failure of John's regime in 425, effectively ended the attraction of usurpation as an expression of personal ambition as well as political discord. Direct threats to the Theodosian dynasty therefore fell away as a new, more subtle form of revolt came to dominate the political life of the western empire. Following the example of Constantius, political discord now took the form of ambitious generals seeking to dominate the ruling dynasty from within the structures of the imperial administration. Ultimately, this form of rebellion had a far more disastrous effect on the future of the western Roman empire, as it resulted in a fundamental change in the discourse of imperial power. Where usurpation had emphasized the authority of the imperial throne, this new form of revolt increasingly caused prestige and power to shift away from the person of the emperor to his dominant general. By the late fifth century, the emperor had become a mere figurehead, while true authority lay with his powerful minister.

The events of this period also set precedents for the use of barbarians as third-party interest groups in Roman political life. As we have seen, this period saw the influx of large number of non-Romans seeking recognition and integration in the western Roman empire. These objectives led many barbarian groups to form close relationships with Roman authorities, including both usurpers and the legitimate Honorian regime. Galla Placidia's marriage alliance with Athaulf and

her subsequent close relationship with the royal family of Theodoric resulted in the integration of the Visigoths into the Roman political sphere and their settlement in the southern Gallic province of Aquitania. While there is little reason to believe that Constantius intended this settlement to be a permanent fixture of the Roman landscape, the death of Constantius in 421 and the subsequent years of imperial distraction allowed the settlement, and its court at Toulouse, to gradually become a regional center of political authority. As such, the Visigoths were destined to play a tremendous role in later Roman political life.

These political transformations which arose as a result of the weakness of the western Roman administration under Honorius culminated in the political struggles that characterized the regime of his nephew, the emperor Valentinian III. The emperor's mother and regent, the Augusta Galla Placidia, proved unable to control the internal disputes of her generals, the new MVM Constantius Felix, the *comes Africae* Boniface, and the MVM *per Gallias* Flavius Aëtius. The years 425-433 were therefore a period of political chaos and civil war, as each of these men fought to achieve dominance over the new regime, while ostensibly maintaining their allegiance to the Theodosian dynasty. This conflict ended in 433 with the emergence of Flavius Aëtius as the dominant military strongman.

In much the same way as Placidia had relied on the followers of Athaulf for the promotion of her own political interests in 414-415, Aëtius' rise to power and maintenance of political control over the regime of Valentinian was predicated on his close relationship to the independent power of the Hunnic confederation of Rua, Bleda, and Attila. As we have seen, Rua had already secured Aëtius' position in the new regime as a consequence of the Hunnic conflict in 425. Following the defeat of Aëtius' Roman army in 432, Rua again invaded the western empire on behalf of his

client, forcing Placidia to recognize Aëtius as her dominant military official, a position that he would hold until his assassination at the hands of the emperor Valentinian III himself in 454.

Aëtius' political ambitions and his primary tactics for maintaining control over the imperial court make his career the natural result of the political transformations of Honorian regime. Aëtius first appears in our sources as the supporter of the usurper John in 425. Nevertheless, while he frequently found himself at odds with the regime of Galla Placidia and Valentinian, he never resorted to such outdated measures in his later career. Instead, he followed tactics similar to those employed by Boniface in 422, launching rebellions against the imperial court while seeking position and status in the imperial administration. In this manner, Aëtius, like Constantius before him, succeeded in dominating the new Theodosian regime from within its own ranks.

Aëtius' relationship with the Huns also reflected the pattern of using barbarians as outside interest groups in intra-Roman political struggles against the legitimate Honorian regime. Galla Placidia herself had engaged in such tactics through her alliance with Athaulf in 414-415, and her continuing relationship with the royal family of Theodoric saw the rise of the Visigothic settlement as a vital source of political support for her regime after 425. In the same way, Aëtius relied on the Huns as valuable, independent supporters in achieving his personal ambitions in the Roman political sphere. Following the decline of direct Hunnic patronage in 439, Aëtius formed relationships with the Alans and the Burgundians, establishing new barbarian settlements on Roman soil, in keeping with the precedent set by Constantius in 418/419.

Finally, the long duration of Aëtius' career solidified these new political realities in the western Roman administration and directly influenced the careers and political mindset of the

young officers who served under him. Following the death of Aëtius in 454, and then the end of the western branch of the Theodosian dynasty in 455, the prestige of the imperial throne was almost completely overshadowed by the power and authority of the dominant general. The career of Aëtius' protégé, the MVM and kingmaker Ricimer, which saw the rise and fall of no less than five emperors from 456 to 472, serves as a vivid testimony to this fact.

The political trials and conflicts of the Theodosian dynasty from 405-425 and the imperial responses to these challenges therefore directly inform our understanding of the history of the western Roman empire in the later fifth century. Ultimately, the changes initiated during the Honorian regime resulted in the shift of political focus away from the imperial throne, first to dominant imperial officials and gradually to more regional centers of authority, particularly the courts of the barbarian kings. While this was a slow process extending over decades and subject to a variety of influences, we must see the new political realities that emerged as a result of the weak regime of Honorius as the basic preconditions that led to the dissolution of Roman administration in the west.

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Vita

Thomas Christopher Lawrence was born in Fort Hood, TX, to Charles and Mona Lawrence. After graduating from Longview High School in 1992, Chris moved to the east and attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. During this time, he also participated in Duke University's Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies in Rome, spending a semester in Italy studying ancient history and archaeology. He graduated from U Mass with Bachelor's Degree in Classics in 1997.

For his graduate work, Chris attended the University of Toronto, where he earned his Master's Degree in History in 2001. He also attended Western Michigan University, before transferring to the University of Tennessee to work on his doctorate with Dr. Michael Kulikowski in 2007. After completing his course work, Chris accepted a lecturership position in the History Department at Penn State University. He continues to teach at this university, hoping to instill the same love of history in his students that so inspired him as an undergraduate and continues to drive him today.